

# Housing Need Supplementary Planning Document Consultation Statement

**December 2023**

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This Consultation Statement has been prepared in accordance with Regulations 12 and 13 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and the council's Statement of Community Involvement.

## **2.0 What was consulted upon?**

2.1 The Housing Need Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was subject to a six-week period of consultation between 24<sup>th</sup> February and 11<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

## **3.0 Why is the SPD needed?**

3.1 The Housing Needs SPD supplements a range of policies in the CDP which seek to meet the different housing needs of our residents. The SPD provides further guidance on the implementation of M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable housing and what constitutes a multi-generational home. Both of these measures are part of the CDP approach to meeting the needs of older people. The SPD also introduces guidance as to what should be considered as part of assessments for determining local area housing needs and the need for purpose-built student accommodation. Furthermore, the SPD provides additional guidance on the application of the Nationally Described Space Standard in different forms of C Class Development, including hotels, dwellings and houses in multiple occupation. The document also contains a First Homes Interim Policy Statement, including local eligibility criteria consisting of a lower price cap to ensure that a First Home is genuinely affordable. Finally, the SPD contains information to ensure an appropriate level of discount is secured for Discount Market Sale affordable homes.

3.2 Providing suitable housing in line with housing needs is an important consideration. Ensuring that the correct type and mix of housing is available, in line with housing needs will serve to support and create mixed, balanced and successful communities.

## **4.0 Area of coverage**

4.1 The SPD covers the whole of County Durham.

### 5.0 Steps the council took to publicise the draft SPD.

5.1 The council publicised the draft SPD by:

- a) emailing consultees on the planning policy consultation database;
- b) targeted emails to stakeholders involved in the delivery of housing development;
- c) hosting two online consultation events;
- d) publicising via the council's online consultation portal;
- e) making hard copies available in Durham County Hall and Customer Access Points;
- f) making the SPD available on the council's website;
- g) using the council's corporate notifications and social media outlets;
- h) and press release.

### 7.0 Formal responses to the consultation

7.1 There were 18 consultees who made representations to the SPD. These are set out in full with the council's response in Appendix A. Representations were made by:

- NHS Property Services Ltd
- Bellway Homes Limited (Group Office)
- Belmont Parish Council
- Theakston Land
- The Coal Authority
- Natural England
- Private Individuals
- Karbon Homes
- Barratt Homes North East
- Avant Homes (North East)
- Taylor Wimpey
- Miller Homes
- Gilesgate Residents Association
- City of Durham Parish Council
- Sunderland Council
- Banks Group

7.2 In summary responses highlighted the following key issues:

- a) Housing Providers unanimously reported that the introduction of a local cap on First Homes would cause significant viability issues to all schemes and would prevent future building in the county.
- b) Local resident groups were equally concerned that the cap on First Homes would make the properties unaffordable and should be lowered.
- c) Representations from Town and Parish Councils along with other community groups highlighted that Housing Need Assessments should as standard, include a requirement to consult the local Town and Parish Council and make reference to the current neighbourhood plan for the development area.
- d) Comments were made to seek that the council had the opportunity to sign off the approach/method used for housing needs assessments, to ensure that results would be acceptable.

## Appendix 5a

- e) Developers wanted more guidance on the specific requirements of multi-generational homes to avoid delays in the planning process.
- f) The use of M4(2) statement and checklist was welcomed but some groups felt that the checklist should be mandatory.

### 8.0 Updating the SPD

8.1 Following consideration of the feedback received several changes were made to the SPD or the position maintained. These include:

- a) In relation to the Housing Needs Assessments the comments received were on the whole, positive, with suggestions made and adopted to strengthen this tool in assessing local housing need. This included widening the consultation groups to include specific groups such as Parish Councils and known resident groups, as well as the requirement to reference existing documents including local neighbourhood plans. In order to reduce abortive works, the suggestion was also adopted to require sign off from the Housing Delivery Team for the approach to be used and the area covered.
- b) The First Homes cap has been considered as part of an updated assessment of plan wide viability and has been increased in line with viability considerations;
- c) A section of SPD has been added on how the council determines the discount required to Discount Market Sale affordable homes, which reflects an update to the plan wide viability assessment;
- d) Clarification that detailed drawings may be requested as part of the planning application at the Council's discretion if required to verify that dwellings are M4(2) compliant;
- e) Additional text has been added to provide some examples of appropriate locations within a site for older persons housing, including the suggestion for the applicant to consider whether it would be more appropriate to cluster together these house types;
- f) Clarification added that for a multi-generational home to be acceptable, a bespoke house type should be developed specially to meet the needs of older people living with their family;
- g) In relation to NDSS in HMOs, additional text was added to set out that planning conditions can be added to prevent increases in the number of tenants within HMOs, to help to prevent subdivision and reductions in internal space standards;
- h) An addition was made to the requirements demonstrating quantitative need to include that the applicant should attach original correspondence from the education provider;

- i) The text 'appropriate exterior space' was added to the PBSA amenities list; and
- j) An addition was made to the requirements regarding consultation with relevant education providers and that the developer should have received a response from the relevant education body before an application is submitted.

### **9.0 Next Steps**

9.1 The SPD will be subject to a second stage of consultation from 26 February to 7 April 2024. The consultation will be publicised using the following methods:

- a) emailing consultees on the planning policy consultation database;
- b) targeted emails to stakeholders involved in the delivery of housing development;
- c) emailing those who responded to the first stage of consultation or attended an event;
- d) publicising via the council's online consultation portal;
- e) making hard copies available in Durham County Hall and Customer Access Points;
- f) making the SPD available on the council's website;
- g) using the council's corporate notifications and social media outlets; and
- h) press release.

