

SUBJECT:	MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVISED AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
MEETING:	PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE:	2nd July 2019
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is:

- 1.1 To inform Planning Committee of the results of the recent consultation exercise regarding the revised Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance produced to provide further guidance in relation to Policy S4 of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan.
- 1.2 To seek Planning Committee's endorsement of the SPG, with a view to it being formally adopted by Cabinet in July 2019 as SPG in connection with the Monmouthshire LDP.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 To endorse the revised Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance, with a view to it being formally adopted as SPG in connection with the Monmouthshire LDP and to recommend this to Cabinet.

3. **KEY ISSUES:**

Background

- 3.1 The Monmouthshire County Council LDP 2011-2021 was adopted on 27th February, 2014 to become the adopted development plan for the County (excluding that part within the Brecon Beacons National Park). The Affordable Housing SPG, adopted in March 2016, was prepared to provide further clarification on the interpretation and implementation of the LDP's affordable housing policies. Since the SPG was adopted a number of issues have arisen in relation to the viability of affordable housing provision on certain types of development sites, which has triggered the need to revise the SPG. The SPG has been revised to provide guidance on how affordable housing policies will be implemented, in particular with regard to commuted sums payable on small-scale developments. The revised SPG has been informed by evidence and experience gathered over the last 2 years since the current (March 2016) SPG was adopted.
- 3.2 Planning Committee endorsed the revised Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance that is the subject of this report on 2nd April 2019, with a view to issuing it for consultation purposes. Subsequently, on 10th April 2019 the Cabinet Member for Innovation, Enterprise and Leisure took the decision to issue the SPG for consultation. A copy of the Cabinet Member Report is attached as **Appendix 1**.

- 3.3 The consultation took place for a period of 6 weeks between 11th April 2019 and 28th May 2019. This included reporting the proposed SPG to Adult Select Committee at its meeting on 30th April 2019.
- 3.4 Twelve parties commented on the SPG. These are summarised, together with the Council's response, in the Report of Consultation provided as **Appendix 2**. Generally, no significant objections were received and only a small number of minor amendments to the SPG documents are considered necessary. One concern which was raised during the consultation period related to the proposal for the Council to not seek financial contributions for barn conversions. As outlined in Appendix 2 it is considered that the build costs of new build houses and barns conversions are very different. It is much cheaper to build a new house and it has been evidenced from previous viability assessments that barn conversions are largely not viable. The purpose of the LDP barn conversion policy is to preserve traditional barns and ensure these structures to be brought back into beneficial use to preserves the character and appearance of Monmouthshire's rural landscape. This form of development is maintaining other policy objectives within the LDP. On balance, it is considered that requesting a financial contribution for single barn conversions has proven to be unviable and we will therefore seek contributions on new build development only.
- 3.5 It is considered, therefore, that the document can be formally adopted as SPG to support the Monmouthshire LDP. The revised SPG, is attached as **Appendix 3**.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 Under the Planning Act (2004) and associated Regulations, all local planning authorities are required to produce a LDP. The Monmouthshire LDP was adopted on 27 February 2014 and decisions on planning applications are now being taken in accordance with policies and proposals in the LDP. The Affordable Housing SPG provides further explanation and guidance on the way in which Policy S4 will be implemented.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Officer time and costs associated with the preparation of SPG documents and carrying out the required consultation exercises. Any costs will be met from the Planning Policy and Development Management budget and carried out by existing staff.

6.0 EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 6.1 Under the Planning Act (2004), the LDP was required to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The role of the SA was to address the extent to which the emerging planning policies would help to achieve the wider environmental, economic and social objectives of the LDP. The LPA also produced a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC; requiring the 'environmental assessment' of certain plans and programmes prepared by local authorities, including LDP's. All stages of the LDP were subject to a SA/SEA, therefore and the findings of the SA/SEA were used to inform the development of the LDP policies and site allocations in order to ensure that the LDP would be promoting sustainable development. SPG is expanding and providing guidance on these existing LDP policies, which were prepared within a framework promoting sustainable development.

- 6.2 The LDP was also subjected to an Equality Challenge process and due consideration was given to the issues raised. As with the sustainable development implications considered above, SPG is expanding and providing guidance on these existing LDP policies, which were prepared within this framework.
- 6.3 In addition, a Future Generations Evaluation is attached. This includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments (attached as **Appendix 4**).

7.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 7.1 Having assessed the consultation responses, the following options were considered:
- 1) Recommend the SPG for adoption without any changes;
 - 2) Recommend the SPG for adoption with some changes based on an assessment of the feedback;
 - 3) Recommend the SPG for adoption with changes to reflect every response;
 - 4) Do not proceed with the SPG.
- 7.2 The SPG provides specific guidance on the interpretation/implementation of the LDP policy framework in relation to affordable housing. Option 4 is therefore discounted as the document will support the provision of affordable housing in Monmouthshire, a key policy objective. The consultation responses have raised a number of valid and constructive points, all of which have been considered and responded to in appendix 2. As a result, some amendments are proposed in response to the consultation (option 2).
- 7.3 Based on the reasons above, it is the preferred option (2) to formally adopt this revised SPG as amended to support the Monmouthshire LDP.

8.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA

The success of the adopted SPG will be monitored via the LDP Annual Monitoring Report. This will include a review of:

- the SPG use in decision-making and the extent to which it informs decisions and is upheld via appeal decisions;
- the amount of money collected as commuted sums;
- instances where viability is debated;
- the percentage of affordable housing secured on site and number of affordable homes secured.

9.0 REASONS:

Under the Planning Act (2004) and associated Regulations, all Local Planning Authorities are required to produce a LDP. The Monmouthshire LDP was adopted on 27 February 2014 and decisions on planning applications are being taken in accordance with policies and proposals in the LDP. This Revised Draft SPG provides guidance on the delivery of affordable housing.

10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Officer time and costs associated with the preparation of SPG documents and carrying out the required consultation exercises. Any costs will be met from the Planning Policy budget and carried out by existing staff.

11.0 CONSULTTEES:

- Planning Committee
- Adult Select Committee

12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Monmouthshire Adopted LDP (February 2014)

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