



**CABINET – 3 OCTOBER 2001**

## **NEW FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN ALTERATIONS – HOUSING NEEDS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Report recommends changes to the Council’s policies relating to “Housing Needs and Affordable Housing”, as set out in the Local Plan. If agreed, these changes will be published as “Proposed Alterations” to the adopted Local Plan and representations will be invited on them.
- 1.2 This follows on from the publication and deposit of other Proposed Alterations to the Local Plan as agreed by the Council in June. These other Proposed Alterations were placed on deposit for public consultation between 20<sup>th</sup> July and 14<sup>th</sup> September.
- 1.3 The Proposed Alterations to “Affordable Housing” policies were held back because in June the Council had not received the results of the Housing Needs and Market Assessment Survey. A draft of the Consultant’s final report has now been received, and has been fully taken into account in revising the relevant policies and associated targets.
- 1.4 After the consultation on the Affordable Housing policies (it is intended to place them on deposit for public consultation in November/December), a report will be brought back to Members on the representations that have been received on all of the Proposed Alterations. Further changes may be recommended for “Revised Deposit” before a Public Inquiry is heard into objections.

### **2. THE PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICIES**

- 2.1 The main policies relating to affordable housing are set out in Section B4 of the Local Plan. It is proposed to completely replace this section with a new section: “B4A Housing needs and the provision of affordable housing” (see Annex 1).
- 2.2 The main findings of the 2001 Housing Needs and Market Assessment Survey are summarised in paragraphs B4.7A to B4.10A of Annex 1.
- 2.3 The Housing Needs and Market Assessment study clearly shows that there are significant problems of housing need and affordability in this District. The impact that Local Plan policies can have in addressing the problem is limited, and we are restricted in what we can try to do by Government Planning Guidance. However, working within current government guidance there is some scope to revise current Local Plan policies in response to the District’s housing needs.



- 2.4 The proposed policy changes are set out in full in Annex 1. In summary, they are:
- Retaining the current minimum site size threshold in built-up areas (15 dwellings or 0.5 hectares) for contributions to affordable housing, but making it clear that it would be lowered if changes in Government Guidance allowed it to be.
  - Increasing affordable housing targets on sites in built up areas from 30% to 35%.
  - Requiring all new housing outside the defined built-up areas (i.e. in the New Forest and other countryside) to contribute towards affordable housing and increasing the affordable housing target to 50% in these areas, reflecting the Government statement in the Rural White Paper).
  - Including Sandleheath with the “countryside” for affordable housing policies (rather than “built-up areas”) given its population of less than 3,000.
  - Emphasising the requirement to provide the required affordable housing on site and redressing the previous imbalance which might have made it more attractive to provide it off-site or through contributions.
  - Requiring all new dwellings in the New Forest (except replacement dwellings) which are not controlled as “affordable dwellings” to be subject to a ‘local occupier’ condition/ restriction. (already done in some other National Parks).
  - Some controls on the loss of care and nursing homes.
  - Requiring dwellings which are subject to agricultural occupancy conditions to be first offered to New Forest District Council Partner Registered Social Landlords if no longer needed for agricultural purposes.

### **3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no major environmental implications arising from the Proposed Alterations to the Affordable Housing policies.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None arising directly from this report.

### **5. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None arising directly from this report.

### **6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The decision to make proposed alterations to the adopted Local Plan as outlined in this report may amount to an interference with Article 8 (Right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Right of a property owner to peacefully enjoy his possessions) of the European Convention of Human Rights. However, such possible interference is capable of justification as being in accordance with the law, in the public interest and necessary in a democratic society for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others and for the economic well-being of the country. The recommendations contained in this report are considered to be proportional to the legitimate aim of protecting the rights and freedoms of those in our society and for safeguarding the economic well-being of our country as well as being in the public interest.

## **7. VIEWS OF ECONOMY AND PLANNING AND HOUSING REVIEW PANELS AND PLANNING DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

- 7.1 A special joint meeting of the Economy and Planning and Housing Review Panels and the Planning Development Control Committee was held on 18 September 2001 to consider the proposals relating to housing need and affordable housing policies as summarised at Paragraph 2.4 above and set out fully in Annex 1.
- 7.2 The Joint Meeting endorsed these proposals and supports their adoption by the Cabinet and Council.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 **That the proposed alterations to the policies of the adopted New Forest District Local Plan on “Housing Needs and the provision of Affordable Housing”, as set out in Annex 1 to this report, be agreed and formally placed on deposit for public consultation;**
- 8.2 **That the Director of Environment Services be authorised to make any necessary further minor amendments, including consequential changes and further editing changes, in preparing the proposed alterations for publication;**
- 8.3 **That the Proposed Alterations in Annex 1 be adopted as Council policy for development control purposes.**

### **Further Information:**

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### **Background Papers:**

Housing Need and Market Assessment Study, 2001. David Couttie and Associates.