

Item 10 – Changes to Government Guidance on Planning Obligations - Implications on SDC's Affordable Housing Policies

The attached report was considered by the Housing & Community Safety Advisory Committee relevant minute extract below:

Housing & Community Safety Advisory Committee – 10 February 2015 (Minute 34)

The Planning Manager presented a report which advised that the Government had recently published changes to the National Planning Practice Guidance and a written ministerial statement was issued on planning obligations. In most areas, contributions to affordable housing would not now be sought from developments of 10-units or less. In designated rural areas, local authorities could choose to seek financial contributions on developments of 6-10 dwellings in designated rural areas. In addition, where developments involved the conversion or demolition of existing buildings the contribution would be proportionate to the net increase in floorspace. Therefore, developments that did not increase the amount of floorspace on a site would not have to make an affordable housing contribution. These changes would have a significant impact on the Council's ability to secure the delivery of affordable housing. At present there was not considered to be any opportunities for the Council to 'work-around' these changes to national policy. As a result, it was considered that the Council should lobby the Government to rescind or amend these policy changes.

A [briefing note](#) by the Housing Policy Manager had been circulated and was tabled for information on the Starter Homes initiative from which the Chief Housing Officer highlighted some key points.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that

- a) the Council lobby Government to rescind or amend recent changes to national policy on the use of planning obligations for securing affordable housing; and
- b) the Council seeks financial contributions to affordable housing consistent with the percentages applied in Core Strategy policy SP3 on developments of 6-10 units in designated rural areas in the District.