

# **Council Meeting – 12 December 2017**

## **Reinforcement of 25% Affordable Housing in the Core Strategy**

### **Motion proposed by Councillor Fran Smith, seconded by Councillor Simon Coles**

The Council notes

- That the Council's Core Strategy 2011-2028 - Vision states:-

"By 2028 Taunton Deane will be recognised nationally as a place that is developing sustainably, securing a better life and future for its communities. Taunton Deane will be a more accessible and equitable place where those living and working can access suitable and Affordable Housing, a range of services, recreational and leisure facilities, and where deprivation is tackled.

An Affordable Housing Viability Study has been undertaken to support the Council's Affordable Housing position. This Study, undertaken by Fordham Research, concludes that an Affordable Housing target of 25% would be viable and appropriate for adoption based upon current market conditions. In addition to this study, further viability testing has been undertaken for both the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and in order to demonstrate the deliverability of the Plan's proposed urban extensions. All three studies conclude that the 25% target is viable at present and can generally be achieved in combination with a package of developer contributions.

The Core Strategy will provide for at least 17,000 new dwellings over the period 2008 to 2028 supporting the Plan's employment-led strategy. 25% of new housing stock will be affordable to meet existing and arising need over the plan period. The target percentage will ensure that the Plan accounts for the needs of those unable to access market housing but is not set so prohibitively high so as to inhibit the delivery of essential infrastructure."

- That in Taunton Deane currently there are 2,012 people on the housing waiting list and unless a solution is found immediately the chronic shortage of Affordable Housing will continue to persist.
- The 2012 Core Strategy is still pertinent even though it is now over five years old and the Government's latest guidance indicates that plans should be reviewed at least every five years.
- West Somerset Members may not wish to progress with the new joint plans. Therefore waiting until May 2019 is not an option for Taunton Deane residents.

The Council accepts that the decision of the Planning Committee has led to the Staplegrove development foregoing Taunton Deane's policy of 25% Affordable Housing in favour of providing only 15%, giving the developers an extra 163 open market homes at the expense of our struggling families and younger generations in our Borough who cannot get onto the housing ladder.

The Council should take note of Shelter's Chief Executive Officer (Polly Neate) warning that the dire lack of Affordable Housing is the main cause of homelessness. The figures from the Department for Communities and Local Government show an increase of 16% on the previous year.

The Council should therefore recognise the need to take action immediately, otherwise other sites will shortly follow suit and the public will end up paying the heavy price for it.

### **The Council resolves:-**

(i) That the viability testing that underpinned the Core Strategy should be updated by independent consultants;

(ii) That the draft Core Strategy policies should be prepared for consultation that would:-

(a) Maximise the provision of Affordable Housing, in line with the Taunton Deane Core Strategy taking into account the Community Infrastructure Levy and other obligations.

(b) The recently adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan together with Garden Town status should persist on 25% Affordable Housing until that work is completed.

(c) In Part of Policy CP4

#### **Delete**

"Where scheme viability may be affected, applicants will be expected to provide full development appraisals (at their own cost) demonstrating the level of affordable housing provision that is appropriate."

#### **And Insert**

"Levels of Affordable Housing in line with the Fordham Research are non-negotiable and integral parts of Taunton Deane's Planning are included in the Policy."

(iii) The recently adopted Site Allocation and Development Management Plan together with Garden Town status should ensure 25% Affordable Housing is provided wherever possible until the review is completed; and

(iv) That the officers should begin the process of a full review of the Core Strategy to reinforce its Affordable Housing policy as set out above, including contacting The Planning Inspectorate to seek an expedited time scale for the process.

