

## **Consultation paper: affordable housing targets change 2008**

### **Background**

Two stimuli have prompted this change. Firstly, the Leeds Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2007 presents evidence that Leeds needs nearly 2000 new affordable dwellings every year; this is about 4 times higher than the previous housing need assessment from 2003. Secondly, the Regional Spatial Strategy “The Yorkshire & Humber Plan” is now nearing completion after several years of preparation. It is anticipated to be adopted as the statutory development plan around April 2008. Policy H3 of the Proposed Changes sets a 30-40% target of affordable housing to be provided from market housing developments for Leeds. It is described as an interim indicative estimate of the proportion of new housing that may need to be affordable.

### **Reason for Policy Change**

Current affordable housing targets set out in the Unitary Development Plan 2006, Supplementary Planning Guidance 2003 & Housing Need Annex 2007 approximate to 25% of new housing developments to be affordable in most parts of Leeds; central/inner areas are exceptional in having a target of 15%. The City Council is currently preparing a new Supplementary Planning Document on affordable housing provision which will introduce new affordable housing targets and a comprehensive package of detailed guidance. It is being prepared as part of the Local Development Framework with public consultation and a sustainability appraisal and is expected to be completed in December 2008. The problem is that the new RSS targets are set to become part of the development plan for Leeds in the spring, and there will be a period of uncertainty until the SPD is finalised in December when the local and regional targets differ. Hence, this non-statutory guidance is intended to clarify which targets should prevail for the interim period until the SPD is adopted.

### **New affordable housing targets**

The following targets are set out as suggestions for public consultation during January/February with the intention that new targets will be adopted for development control purposes in Leeds from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 or on adoption of the Yorkshire & Humber Plan, whichever is the later.

It is also proposed that all other aspects of current affordable housing policy as set out in the Supplementary Planning Guidance 2003 & Housing Need Annex 2007 should remain in force.

Increase the affordable housing targets for the SPG housing market zones as follows:

	Current	Proposed
Outer area/rural	25-30%	33%
Outer suburbs	25%	33%
Inner suburbs	25%	33%

Inner areas	15%	33%
City centre	15%	15%

The zones have the same boundaries as set out in the SPG with the one exception that the EASEL area would continue to apply its own targets as stipulated in the LDF Area Action Plan Preferred Options.

### **Reasoning**

Given the scale of need for new affordable dwellings identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment – 1889 dwellings per annum – there is good justification for a target of 33%. This will be the case if the total housing requirement for Leeds set by the Regional Spatial Strategy increases to 4740 dwellings p.a. (gross). In fact, an even higher target could be justified given that many developments will not be able to provide the target proportion of affordable housing either because of viability reasons or because the scale of development falls below the size thresholds. Nevertheless, increasing the target to 33% will be dramatic enough at this stage.

The city centre is exceptional because of increasing demands for other S106 requirements, including public realm & public transport.

### **Consultation**

The consultation period runs from 11<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> February. Comments on the proposed new targets should be posted or emailed to:

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