

REPORT TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE		Report No. 11
Date of Meeting	11 th September 2008	
Title of Report	Progress Report on the Revised Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.	
Link to Corporate Priorities	Affordable Housing	
Public Report	YES	

<p>Summary of Report</p> <p>This report provides a summary on the performance of the Revised Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The report concludes that the Revised SPD has seen improvements in the delivery of affordable housing provision from small rural developments.</p>
<p>Officer Recommendations</p> <p>To accept the conclusions of the report with no recommendations for any amendments to the SPD.</p>

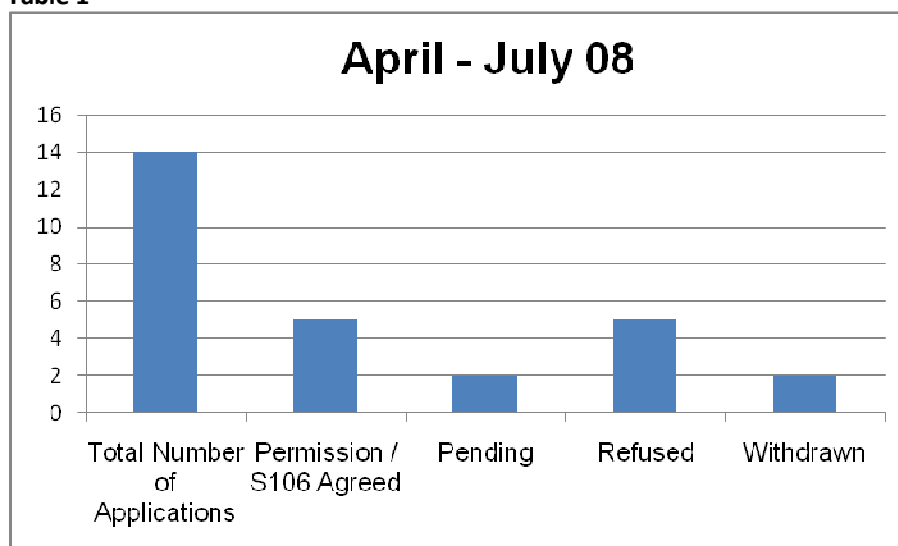
Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.				
Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
Yes	None	YES	None	YES

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Revised Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was formally adopted on the 10th April 2008. The revision to the original SPD was in response to the difficulty experienced securing off-site financial contributions from single dwelling and odd number developments in rural areas. The Council's Executive Committee accepted the officer recommendation to introduce a flat fee of £26,000 for off-site contributions on single dwelling developments and developments where there is an odd dwelling in rural areas.
- 1.2 This report is intended to provide a brief summary on the performance of the revised SPD since adoption. The period covered is from the 1st April 2008 through until the 31st July 2008. For comparison purposes this report refers to the Affordable Housing Briefing Paper (12th October 2007) which was released as evidence for the need to review the Affordable Housing SPD adopted August 2007.
- 1.3 During this period 18 schemes have been submitted for planning permission which have a requirement for either on-site affordable housing, or an off-site financial contribution towards affordable housing. This includes schemes that are outside the Settlement Framework Boundary (Exception Sites); and excludes conversions and those that are revisions to earlier schemes. 14 of these schemes are directly applicable to the revisions to the Affordable Housing SPD and will be the main discussion of this report.

Table 1

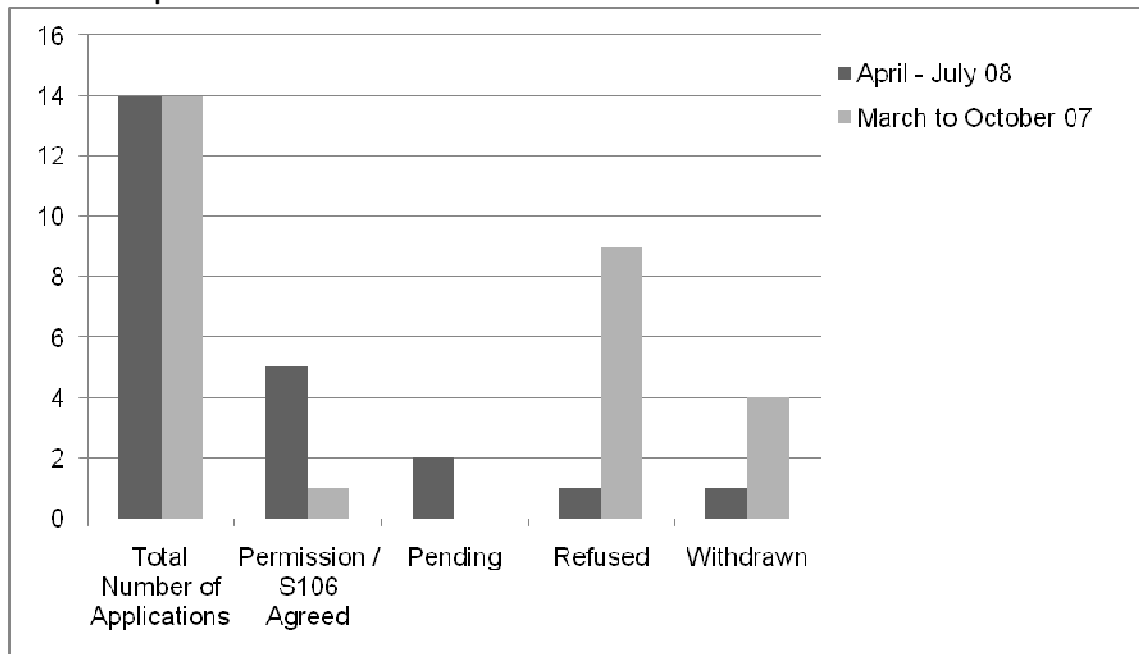


- 1.4 To date 5 applications have completed S106 negotiations on affordable housing contributions which equates to £121,000 in commuted sums¹. A further 2 applications are pending. In total there is a maximum of £173,100 in commuted sums available from the applications that have been granted permission and those applications still pending.

¹ This is equates to 4 x £26,000 and 1 x £17,100. Exception circumstances in one particular application reflect the lower figure.

- 1.5 Table 1 shows that out of the 14 applications that were subject to the revised AH SPD, 5 have been refused and a further 2 withdrawn. Out of the 5 applications that were refused, only one refers to the lack of affordable housing provision as a particular reason for refusal. The remainder were refused as a result of other planning issues. This is similar in respect of applications that have been withdrawn, where affordable housing requirements have not been a significant factor.
- 1.6 Table 2 provides a very good illustration of the performance of the revised Affordable Housing SPD. All the information on this table reflects applications where Affordable Housing issues played a significant role in determining the outcome of the application. It is clear that more affordable housing will be delivered and this is matched by a significant reduction in the number of applications refused or withdrawn as a result of the policy.

Table 2: Comparison of Performance



Additional information

- 1.7 During the process of collating this information Planning Officers have been asked for their own experiences of implementing the revised AH SPD. An initial positive response has been that the revised SPD is easier to interpret and the simple approach avoids any doubt for applicants and also Planning Officers.
- 1.8 Questions of affordability and the financial burden on developers, although not as vehement, are still prevalent. This has become a greater concern to potential developers over recent months, particularly in the current economic climate. This is particularly relevant when affordable housing requirements are combined with Open Space Contributions, where it is claimed that it represents an onerous requirement on developers. This claim is nothing new and reflects the desire by developers to maintain healthy returns. However, this being the case the current economic climate does present challenges for the future.

Conclusion

- 1.9 The general conclusion is that the revised Affordable Housing SPD has provided a clear and simple approach to securing much needed affordable housing in the district. Since April 2008 the SPD £121,000 has been agreed through S106 Agreements. Compare this to an 8 month period last year when no off-site financial contributions were secure, it represents a significant improvement.
- 1.10 Discussions with Planning Officers and Housing Offices conclude that there has not been any reluctance in landowners to bring forward small sites in rural areas. The SPD has started to deliver positive results which will help the authority meet a recognised need for affordable housing in the District. The future does present some challenges, particularly because of the current economic climate. However, through effective monitoring this authority and the future unitary authority should be well placed to deal with such challenges.

2. Options and Options Appraisal

- 2.1 Option 1:
To accept the conclusions of this report with no recommendation for amendments to the SPD
- 2.2 Option 2:
Not to accept the conclusions of this report and for the committee to accept a revised recommendation.

3. Implications

3.1 Financial Implications

The Revised SPD has enabled the authority to secure additional funding for Affordable Housing provision within the district.

3.2 Community & Environmental / Equality and Diversity Implications

The ability to secure affordable housing contributions enables the authority to improve access to affordable housing. It helps to ensure that everyone has access to decent and appropriate accommodation.

Appendices:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing Paper 12th October 2007

Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

Report	Committee & Date	Minute Reference
17. Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document Revision	Executive Committee 13/03/2008	13/03/2008