

Draft  
Chichester District Council

## **Interim Policy Statement on Housing – Facilitating Appropriate Development**

Effective xxxx

Please note that this Statement does not apply to land in the South Downs National Park. For advice on planning in the Park please refer to the National Park Authority.

### **Background**

We need to achieve more housebuilding in the short term. For a number of reasons, housing has not come forward to meet required needs.

At present, proposals within Settlement Policy Areas [SPA] have a presumption in favour of development but there are very few suitable sites left within SPA; outside SPA there is a presumption against development.

Without a new approach, we risk a major failure to deliver housing.

Government policy requires the Council to demonstrate a five year housing land supply. The Council is progressing its Core Strategy, which will set out the overall level of housing and its distribution and will specify the locations for the larger housing sites that are of strategic importance. Until the Core Strategy is in place, the Council must rely on the “saved” policies of the Local Plan and guidance provided by Government to help determine the acceptability of proposals.

The Council wants to avoid a shortfall in housing sites as this would leave it exposed to demands to grant planning permissions for sites that would otherwise be inappropriate. The potential of a great number of sites was considered in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment published in 2010 but this was simply an assessment of their general suitability, it did not allocate sites for development.

Even when the Core Strategy is in place, there may be a delay in delivering significant numbers of dwellings. Large sites, in particular, take some time to “get away” and the numbers of units built and sold each year will be limited. We need a mix of sizes and of locations of sites to allow for a number and variety of providers to have a diverse “offer” and to more readily maintain a supply of dwellings. Allowing smaller developments is more likely to keep up a flow of housing units, to allow local needs to be met and to support local facilities.

The Council must continue to judge planning applications on their individual merits and cannot argue that applications must wait until the Core Strategy is complete. It needs, therefore, to manage the delivery of housing sites by giving guidance as to which sites might be appropriate for development in the short term, relying on the future adoption of the Core Strategy to provide firm direction.

The saved policies of the Local Plan help with some issues but they do not address the need for further greenfield housing developments outside of existing Settlement Policy Areas as the SPA boundaries are, themselves, in need of review. Government guidance helps in that it specifies what councils should “have regard to” when considering planning applications.

This Interim Policy Statement therefore seeks to interpret national guidance in the light of local circumstances. It will be used by the Council to assist in the consideration of planning applications.

It is intended that this Statement will apply until the saved policies of the Local Plan are replaced by an adopted Core Strategy as part of the Local Development Framework, or until the Council can demonstrate an up to date five year housing supply.

### ***The Development Plan***

The Development Plan is the “saved” policies of the Chichester District Local Plan First Review, adopted in 1999 and the South East Plan. This will be replaced over the next few years by the Chichester District Local Development Framework.

### ***PPS3 Housing, June 2011 says that:***

*[paragraph 71] “Where Local Planning Authorities cannot demonstrate an up-to-date five year supply of deliverable sites....or there is less than five years supply .... they should consider favourably planning applications for housing, having regard to the policies in this PPS including the considerations in paragraph 69”....*

*[paragraph 69] “In general, in deciding planning applications, Local Planning Authorities should have regard to:*

- Achieving high quality housing.*
- Ensuring developments achieve a good mix of housing reflecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups, in particular, families and older people.*
- The suitability of a site for housing, including its environmental sustainability.*
- Using land effectively and efficiently.*
- Ensuring the proposed development is in line with planning for housing objectives, reflecting the need and demand for housing in, and the spatial vision for, the area..”*

### **Local Context**

The approach put forward in this document is based on identifying criteria that accord with national and local planning policies. There are “saved” policies in the Local Plan that give guidance on development of sites within Settlement Policy Area boundaries. This Interim Policy Statement relates to sites **outside existing Settlement Policy Area boundaries.**

The Council is concerned to cover a possible shortfall in sites and construction until the proposals in the Core Strategy can begin to deliver. Therefore, sites put forward under this Interim Policy Statement approach should be “deliverable” at the time that they are put forward. They should not, for example, be dependent upon delivery of significant off-site infrastructure; and should be fully in the applicant’s control.

Applicants will be expected, therefore, to show that they intend to develop sites promptly so that the dwellings are delivered within a short period [up to a maximum of 5 years]. Evidence of deliverability and the intention to develop will be required to support planning applications and to help enable the Council to resist applications for less suitable sites. The Interim Policy Statement is not intended to apply to sites that can come forward at a later stage as these can be considered under the provisions of the Core Strategy when it is adopted [this is scheduled for May 2013].

Sites should be in sustainable locations, adjacent to existing Settlement Policy Areas, as these generally have facilities likely to be needed by new residents.

Sites should be of a scale appropriate to the adjoining Settlement Policy Area. Smaller scale sites that provide for the gradual growth of settlements are more likely to be suitable than sites that would significantly change the character of a place. Thus, developments adjoining small towns and villages will be expected to be smaller in scale than those that might be suitable for the extension of Chichester, with its larger size and range of facilities.

## **Interim Policy Statement on Housing – Facilitating Appropriate Development**

**New housing development may be acceptable outside of existing Settlement Policy Areas providing all the criteria set out below are met.**

**1**

**The site boundary is contiguous with a Settlement Policy Area [SPA] as identified in the Local Plan (at least one boundary must physically adjoin the SPA in whole or in part).**

**2**

**The likely impact of the development individually, or cumulatively, around the edges of a settlement does not result in the actual or perceived coalescence of settlements.**

**3**

**The development is of a high quality, including its layout and design, and properly addresses issues such as access, flooding and drainage. High standards of sustainable construction are expected as well as the inclusion of the highest feasible levels of renewable and low carbon energy generation; and water and energy efficiency.**

**4**

**There is a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures in accordance with the saved policies of the Local Plan and the Council's Interim Statement on Affordable Housing.**

**5**

**The townscape and landscape character is protected and conserved and enhanced (especially where the character is specifically recognised, such as Chichester Harbour AONB).**

**6**

**Archaeological sites, ancient monuments and listed buildings and their settings are protected, in accordance with national guidelines and saved policies of the Local Plan.**

**7**

**Biodiversity is protected, conserved and enhanced in accordance with national guidelines, saved policies in the Local Plan, and the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan (especially for Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas; and given the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010).**

**8**

**Existing natural features, such as watercourses, woodland, trees and hedgerows, are retained wherever possible. Existing linking features such as hedgerows, streams and ditches and lines of trees should not be broken by new development.**

**9**

**The site and proposed development is sustainable in accordance with the provisions of PPS1, PPS3, and PPG13. Sites where it is possible to walk easily to a range of facilities will be considered preferable to sites that are further away and make car journeys into town/ village centres more likely.**

**10**

**Environmental quality is not compromised, taking account of likely effects on water quality; flood risk; pollutants, including noise and light; energy sources; sustainable construction and recycling of water and waste.**

**11**

**The proposal does not result in the loss of existing sport, recreational or amenity space unless the aims of PPG17 are met.**

**12**

**The impact of the development individually, or cumulatively, does not prejudice comprehensive, long term development, such as may be set out in the Core Strategy.**

**13**

**There is no adverse impact on the setting of the South Downs National Park or on its purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park.**

**14**

**The proposal is not dependent upon delivery of significant off-site infrastructure but makes suitable provision for meeting local infrastructure needs.**

15

The proposal complies with the provisions of any other Interim Policy Statements adopted by the Council; and with the Environment Agency Position Statement, August 2010.

16

Sufficient evidence is provided to demonstrate that the site is deliverable promptly. Applicants must be prepared to accept time limited permissions that have regard to new policy development.

17

The scale of the development is appropriate to the settlement. As a guide, this is likely to mean sites of no more than 100 units adjoining Chichester City; no more than 50 units adjoining the settlement hubs of East Wittering & Bracklesham, Selsey, Southbourne and Tangmere; and no more than 25 units adjoining other Settlement Policy Areas.

Comment [AU1]: Per settlement of per site?

#### **Background documents**

##### **PPS3 Housing – June 2011**

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps3housing>

##### **“Saved” Local Plan policies**

<http://www.chichester.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5080>

##### **The Council’s Interim Policy Statements [as at July 2011]**

*Affordable Housing*

*Planning and Climate Change*

*Development and Disturbance of Birds in Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA*

<http://www.chichester.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=7647>

##### **Environment Agency Position Statement - August 2010**

*Wastewater treatment capacity constraints on new development in Chichester City*

<http://www.chichester.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5079>

#### **Further information**

For further information on this Statement or on progress with the Council’s Local Development Framework please contact the LDF team on 01243 534571; e-mail [ldf@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@chichester.gov.uk); or see [www.chichester.gov.uk](http://www.chichester.gov.uk)