

CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

FOR DECISION

Title: Adoption of Affordable Housing
Supplementary Planning Guidance

Prepared by: Alison Lax Strategic Policy Officer
Don McKee Head Planner

Purpose:

This paper seeks the Board's agreement to adopt the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing to accompany the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan.

Recommendation:

That the Board adopt the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing.

Executive Summary

The Cairngorms National Park Authority has a duty to prepare a Local Plan for the Park and has recently adopted its first Local Plan. In order to provide further detail on a variety of topics, a suite of Supplementary Planning Guidance is also being prepared. This guidance assists applicants in understanding the requirements for the planning applications, and adds a level of detail not appropriate for the Local Plan itself. The guidance supports the adopted Local Plan, and forms a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, and at appeals.

A range of topics will be covered by Supplementary Planning Guidance. Members will be aware that the first batch of guidance was adopted at the Board meeting in October 2010.

The SPG on Affordable Housing that was consulted on during the summer of 2010, along with the rest of the first batch of guidance, is now ready for consideration and approval.

Work is ongoing on additional pieces of guidance, and these are being considered at this meeting, with a view to consulting on them in February and March 2011.

ADOPTION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE – FOR DECISION

Background

1. Members will be aware of the 4 month consultation undertaken on this document from 24 May to 24 September 2010. During this time, the Affordable Housing SPG, along with other pieces of SPG were made available on the CNPA website, and were also sent to all key stakeholder and partners, along with anyone who had been involved in the Local Plan process relating to the specific topics. Comments in support of the documents, criticising the approaches being proposed and suggesting changes were received from various individuals and organisation.
2. Since the end of the consultation, all of the comments received have been fully considered, and decisions made by staff on how to address the issues raised, and whether or not to make the changes suggested, it is inevitable that some of the comments received were contradictory, and so a decision has had to be made on which approach to take.
3. The quality of the responses received was very high, and it is good to see so many individuals and organisations taking an interest in the guidance and putting forward their views and suggestions as to how the documents could be improved.

Responses to the consultation

4. As was reported to the Board on 29th October 2010, the draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance received the most comments, both in numbers, and in the variety of views expressed.
5. Whilst a range of interested individuals, landowners, and developers were in favour of the approach being suggested – this includes the use of a model to assess the economics of any proposed development, others were against this approach. This fundamental difference in opinion is what has been considered over the past few months, and how we can take forward our approach to the assessment of affordable housing proposals.
6. In addition to this point, the following issues were also raised in response to the consultation document, and have been addressed:
 - a. Improve links and references to Housing Need Demand Assessments and Local Housing Strategies;
 - b. Make clear where cash contributions will be spent if applicable;
 - c. Implications of PAN 2/2010 “Affordable Housing and Housing Land Audits” published after the initial consultation draft was published; and
 - d. Clarity over the use of surveys or assessments undertaken by individual communities
7. After looking in detail at all of the responses received, significant changes have been made to the SPG, but these are mainly to improve the clarity of the document in setting out the approach being proposed. Fundamentally, the basis of the approach, the use of an economic model, has been retained.
8. A copy of the final version of the document is attached to this paper.

Implementation of the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance

9. Once adopted the Supplementary Planning Guidance will become a material consideration in the determination of applications. CNPA staff will work with the planning officers in the Local Authorities to ensure the guidance is applied consistently in decisions.

Conclusion

10. In conclusion, the adoption today of this SPG on Affordable Housing will complete the first batch of SPG, an important step closely related to the adoption of the Local Plan itself. It means that applicants will have additional information specifically relating to Affordable Housing developments, in addition to the range of topics covered by the SPG adopted in October 2010. It is hoped this guidance will help lead to a better understanding of what is expected of Affordable Housing proposals in the National Park, and how those applications will be assessed.

Recommendation

11. That the Board adopt the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Affordable Housing.

Implications

12. The budget for the publication of the Supplementary Planning Guidance is planned for in the agreed Operational Plan, as is the ongoing monitoring and updating of the economic model. The staff resources required to undertake this work will fit within existing work programmes.

Implications for Stakeholders

13. The constituent Local Authorities will use the adopted Local Plan, and all of the associated SPG, including this on Affordable Housing, in determining those applications submitted in the Park, but not called in the CNPA. Developers, key agencies, infrastructure undertakers and providers, community groups and residents will also use the Local Plan and SPG to guide and inform further development work in the Park. It will be necessary to continue to work closely with all involved to ensure a clear and widespread understanding of the Local Plan and associated SPG and how it is to be used once adopted.

Alison Lax
Don McKee
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alisonlax@ Cairngorms.co.uk
donmckee@ Cairngorms.co.uk