

MEMORANDUM

To: Alex Howard
Senior Planning Officer

From: Debbie Ealand
Housing Supply Officer
Ext: 4526

Your Ref: 24/01496/FP

Date: 14th August 2024

Full Planning Permission: Erection of one 3 storey building comprising of 15 dwellings with associated access, landscaping and parking following demolition of the existing dwellings and garages.

3 - 5 Newells, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, SG6 2PH

Case Ref No: 24/01496/FP

Dear Alex,

Thank you for your memo of 22 July 2024 in respect of the above application for full planning permission.

The affordable housing requirement is 35% on sites of between 15 and 24 dwellings, in accordance with the Local Plan.

There are 12 allocated sites in Letchworth in the Local Plan, estimated to deliver a total of 1,485 new homes. This site is not allocated and is a proposed redevelopment following demolition of existing residential accommodation by a registered provider.

The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. This should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying the policies concerned, and take into account relevant market signals, in accordance with the NPPF.

Paragraph 63 of the NPPF says “Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing; families with children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes”.

Paragraph 64 of the NPPF says “Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required³⁰, and expect it to be met on-site unless:

a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly

- justified; and
- b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.”

Within the overall affordable housing requirement, the council requires a 65% rented / 35% other affordable housing tenure split, in accordance with the Local Plan, the Developer Contributions SPD and as evidenced in the 2016 Stevenage and North Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update.

The 2016 SHMA Update recommends a greater proportion (59%) of one and two bedroom homes for rent, and a smaller proportion (41%) of three and four bedroom homes for rent. For other forms of affordable housing, the figures are reversed with 36% one and two bedroom homes and 64% three and four bedroom homes.

Based on the provision of 15 dwellings the affordable housing requirement is for 5 dwellings in accordance with Policy HS2: Affordable housing; 3 for rent and 2 other/ intermediate affordable housing units.

The applicant is a registered provider (RP) and is proposing a 100% affordable housing scheme comprising one and two bedroom flats and there is high housing need for one and two bedroom homes for rent across the district.

Policy HS5: Accessible and adaptable housing says that planning permission for major residential development will be granted provided that:

- a) applicants demonstrate that at least 50% of homes can be built to the M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable standard; and
- b) on schemes where 10 or more affordable units will be delivered, 10% of these can additionally be built to the M4(3) wheelchair user standard.

Although the applicant proposes 15 new affordable homes, policy requirement is for five affordable homes and therefore Policy HS5b is not applicable. Policy HS5a still applies.

The nationally described technical housing standards provide the nationally recognised standards for bedrooms, storage and internal areas in new dwellings across all tenures and all the affordable units are required to meet these standards.

Parking courts are not desirable as there is often limited or no natural surveillance and residents prefer to park outside or near to their homes. Where they are used and to minimise on street parking, there should be good natural surveillance.

Where a need for affordable housing is identified the definition in Annex 2 of the Framework should be applied to the type of affordable housing required.

Housing for rent (65% of overall affordable housing) includes Social Rent and Affordable Rent. Housing for Sale (35% of overall affordable housing) includes

Discounted market sale housing and other affordable routes to home ownership including shared ownership, shared equity and rent to buy.

The council will accept social rent and affordable rent for rented tenure dwellings, but it should be noted that the affordable rent for one or two bedroom dwellings should be no more than 80% of the equivalent local market rent (including service charges, where applicable). All rents must be within Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, in accordance with the council's Tenancy Strategy and Developer Contributions SPD.

Issues of viability must be proven with robust documentary evidence using a recognised financial toolkit. Any financial viability assessment submitted will be independently tested at full cost to the applicant.

I hope these comments are useful. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Regards

Debbie Ealand
Housing Supply Officer