

AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

Post consultation version August 2012

A: Introduction

1. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) were introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as part of the reforms to the planning system. Although not forming part of the statutory development plan, one of the functions of an SPD is to provide further detail on policies and proposals within the development plan. SPDs must be consistent with national and regional planning policies as well as the policies set out in the development plan.
2. The Central Lancashire SPDs have been prepared in accordance with the Local Development Regulations (SI 2004.2204), conforming and responding to all relevant local and national policies and are based on a robust and up-to-date evidence base. They form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF) for the Central Lancashire authorities of Chorley, Preston and South Ribble. SPDs do not seek to allocate land but are to be considered alongside Policy in the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Development Plan Documents (DPDs). Their guidance should therefore be taken into consideration from the earliest stages of the development process of any site, including any purchase negotiations and in the preparation of development schemes.
3. The purpose of this SPD is to provide advice on how the Councils' affordable housing policy, as set out in DPDs, is to be implemented. This includes guidance on the range of approaches, standards and mechanisms required to deliver a range of affordable housing to meet local needs.
4. Once adopted, this document should be afforded significant weight as a material consideration in determining planning applications.

B: Planning Policy

National Policy

5. Guidance on planning policy is issued by central Government in the form of The National Planning Policy Framework. Local Planning Authorities have to take the contents of the NPPF into account as a material consideration when determining planning applications and when preparing documents for the Local Development Framework.
6. The requirements of the NPPF insofar as they relate to affordable housing are that;
 - Affordable housing should be based on objectively assessed need identified through a Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
 - Where need is identified it should be met on-site unless off-site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified e.g. to improve or make more effective use of the existing housing stock.

- Local Planning Authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and needs in rural areas, particularly in considering whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs.
- Local Planning Authorities should regard providing limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan as appropriate development in Green Belt.
- To ensure viability, the costs of any requirements likely to be applied to development including affordable housing, should when taking into account the normal cost of development and mitigation provide competitive returns to a willing land owner and willing developer to enable the development to be deliverable.
- The cumulative impact of all local and nationally required standards and policies, including affordable housing should not put implementation of plans at risk and should facilitate development throughout the economic cycle.
- Affordable housing requirements should be assessed at the plan-making stage, where possible, and kept under review.

Regional policy

7. Under powers contained in the Localism Act 2011, it is expected that the Secretary of State will introduce orders to abolish Regional Strategies. The Government has carried out an environmental assessment of the revocation of the existing regional strategies, on a voluntary basis. It is the Government's clear policy intention to revoke existing regional strategies outside London, but this is subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and will not be undertaken until the Secretary of State and Parliament have had the opportunity to consider the findings of the assessments.
8. **The North West Plan Regional Spatial Strategy 2008** is the Regional Plan for the North West to the period 2021 and covers the Central Lancashire area. Policy L5 of the RSS sets out a range of delivery mechanisms to be considered by local planning authorities where appropriate. These are:
 - *seeking a proportion of affordable housing on all development sites which are above the relevant thresholds;*
 - *allocating the development of sites solely (or primarily) for affordable housing use (i.e. up to 100% affordable in rural areas), where necessary;*
 - *using local occupancy criteria to support provision for local housing need so long as this need can be clearly demonstrated, to be implemented through the use of planning conditions and obligations; (note local occupancy criteria are not applicable to Central Lancashire)*
 - *actively promoting the rural exception site policy;*
 - *for all sites containing housing in rural settlements with populations of under 3,000 promote onsite affordable housing provision and where on site affordable housing provision is not possible, seeking developer contributions towards affordable housing;*
 - *making the most of publicly owned land;*
 - *making the most of existing housing stock;*
 - *in line with Policy W4 of RSS , permitting the conversion of buildings in sustainable locations to residential use (including as part of mixed use schemes), particularly*

where commercial premises which are vacant or under-used offer no long term potential or viable contribution to the local economy;

- *encouraging employers to provide housing for their key workers;*
- *ensuring that wherever possible (and subject to continuing evidence), that property remains affordable and available in perpetuity.*

Local Policy

- 9 The **Local Development Framework** is a suite of documents which will, when complete, replace the existing old-style Local Plans as the spatial planning policy documents for the three Central Lancashire councils. The **Core Strategy** is the key document as it sets the overarching vision for the area. It will be underpinned by **Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Documents (Site Allocations DPDs (short title))** for each of the three Local Authorities. These documents will include policies and proposals allocating some land for development whilst protecting other areas from inappropriate development. The Site Allocations DPDs will conform to the Core Strategy. When adopted, the Core Strategy and relevant Site Allocations DPD will be combined as the Local Plan under the NPPF. This will supersede, respectively, the adopted Preston Local Plan 2004, South Ribble Local Plan 2000 and Chorley Borough Local Plan Review 2003.
10. The principal Development Plan policy for the delivery of affordable housing is Policy 7 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy. The Core Strategy was found to be sound, subject to recommended changes, following examination in the Inspector's report of 7 June 2012. It was subsequently adopted by the three Central Lancashire Councils in July 2012 (Preston 5 July, Chorley 17 July, South Ribble 18 July).
11. In summary, the policy requirements set out in Policy 7 of the Core Strategy relating to affordable housing are as follows:

Targets for affordable housing are set subject to site and development considerations such as financial viability and contributions to community services

The target to be achieved from market housing schemes is:

- 30% in urban parts of Preston, South Ribble and Chorley
- 35% in rural areas on sites in or adjoining villages that have, or will have, a suitable range of services
- 100% on rural exception sites including those in the Green Belt.

Site thresholds are 15 dwellings (0.5 ha or part thereof) reducing to 5 dwellings (0.15 ha or part thereof) in rural areas

Off-site provision or financial contributions are acceptable where robustly justified.

- 12 This SPD establishes the following information:

- The cost at and below which housing is considered to be affordable*
- The mix of affordable housing tenures
- Any specific spatial variations in the level and types of affordable housing
- Prevailing market conditions and impacts on viability

*Note: information on costs and spatial variations across Central Lancashire are included in the Central Lancashire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

13. This SPD is one of six underpinning the Core Strategy. SPDs have been prepared covering Affordable Housing, Design, Controlling the Re-use of Employment Premises, Rural Development, Access to Healthy Food and Open Space, Sport and Recreation. It will fit into the LDF by setting out guidance to ensure the Core Strategy policies and objectives on affordable housing are clearly articulated.

C: Strategic Housing Market Assessment

14. In September 2008, the Central Lancashire Housing Market Partnership (Chorley Council, Preston City Council and South Ribble Borough Council) commissioned Outside Consultants and Knight Frank LLP to undertake a comprehensive Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The final report was published in June 2009.
15. The summary of net annual affordable housing need in the SHMA indicates that at 2009 Chorley had an estimated annual shortfall of 723 units, Preston of 397 units and South Ribble an estimated annual shortfall of 660 units. This produces an estimated annual shortfall of affordable housing across the Central Lancashire area of 1,779 units.
16. In Preston the level of interest in social rented housing for both existing households and potential new households is proportionate to the overall provision of social renting within the district (19.4% indicate in the 2008 Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA), DCLG), but in Chorley and South Ribble, particularly amongst potential new households the proportional interest in social rented housing is much greater than reflected in the level of supply (13.1% in Chorley 2008 HSSA and 10.5% in South Ribble 2008 HSSA).
17. Data from the SHMA 2009 shows that the highest demand from households in Chorley looking for social rented housing is for two and three bedroomed accommodation. The demand noted in the SHMA for one and two bedroomed flats is limited and therefore developers are asked to provide mainly two bedroomed houses with fewer three bedroomed houses and small numbers of one bedroomed flats and one & two bedroomed bungalows.
18. The type and size preferences for affordable housing in Preston are similar to those in Chorley, but with a higher proportion demanding two bedroom accommodation and a correspondingly lower proportion demanding three bedroom accommodation.
19. Demand for affordable housing in South Ribble is more varied in its type and size than evident in Chorley and Preston, with 33.7% indicating that they would be interested in a range of housing types. 16% would like two bedroom bungalows and a further 16% would like a four bedroom detached house. Overall, as with Preston the highest demand is for two bedroom property at 59.8%.

D: Defining Affordable Housing

20. The definition of affordable housing is set out in annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework. It includes Social Rented, Affordable Rented and Intermediate housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.

Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

- 21 The NPPF is clear that homes that do not meet the definition as set out in annex 2, for example “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

Affordable Rents

22. In 2011 the Government has introduced the concept of Affordable Rents. Affordable Rented homes will be made available at up to 80% of market rent and allocated in the same way as social housing. Registered Providers will be required to offer Affordable Rented homes where developments are funded by the Homes and Communities Agency. New flexibilities will allow a proportion of Social Rent properties to be made available at re-let at an Affordable Rent.
23. Registered Providers have flexibility on the length of tenancy to be offered for Affordable Rent, and they retain the option to offer lifetime tenancies.
24. Tenancies for Affordable Rent properties must be generally for a minimum period of five years. However, providers will have the flexibility to offer longer tenancies, including lifetime tenancies.

E: Delivery of Affordable Housing

25. The Central Lancashire authorities consider it important to ensure that properties provided by developers on-site as affordable housing are available to those in housing need, initially and in perpetuity, the latter is particularly important in the case of rural exceptions sites where opportunities to provide affordable housing may be restricted.
26. People in housing need comprise those nominated by the Central Lancashire Councils from their Housing Needs Register or similar mechanism in line with its published Allocations Scheme (Housing Act 1996 Section 167 as amended).
27. At present, there exists a sub-regional choice based lettings scheme known as Select Move and this is the mechanism by which affordable homes will be allocated. The exceptions to this are where affordable housing schemes have been provided for a particular special needs group such as disabled or elderly people, and the selection process for residents is approved by the Council, or where occupancy is limited by condition or by the terms of a Section 106 obligation. The allocation conditions of the section 106 will be based around the housing needs for the area.
28. Affordable housing will be secured in perpetuity. The Councils will seek 100% nomination rights on the first lets/sales of all affordable homes reducing to 75% for subsequent relets.
29. The cost of affordable housing, whether rental levels or shared ownership costs, should be affordable to eligible tenants. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2009 indicates that in order to access market housing for purchase the cost of property should be no more than 3.5 times the gross household income for a single income household or 2.9 times gross household income for a two income household (net of any equity that the household may already hold). For market renting the threshold is 25% of gross household income and for shared equity rent and mortgage repayments

total no more than 25% of gross household income. Any household whose income falls below these thresholds is in need of affordable housing. Councils will, before granting planning permission, need to be satisfied that any agreement reached between a developer and Registered Provider for the on-site provision of affordable housing, will ensure that the rental levels and Intermediate (shared ownership) costs will be affordable against local income levels. Service charges for dwellings should be set at appropriate levels to manage and maintain the properties to Registered Provider standards and to meet any on-site requirements, and should be fully transparent in their contents and calculation methods.

30. Affordable housing will be made available :

- For rent at Social Rent levels
- For rent at Affordable Rent levels where there is a demonstrable link to a HCA funded scheme or in exceptional circumstances where it is appropriate because of the particular location or type of housing proposed
- For Intermediate sale under shared ownership leases at affordable shares, other forms of Intermediate sale including discounted market housing

Rented Properties

31. Rents charged for affordable housing, by Registered Provider or other managing bodies, must be in line with the Homes and Communities Agency (or successor body) rent setting policies.

Intermediate Properties

32. The target for general needs Intermediate home ownership costs in Central Lancashire will be set at approximately 30% of gross household income to cover mortgage costs and any “rental charge.” This equates to a figure which is slightly higher than the Government’s indicative figure (which is expressed as a guideline) to allow for the lower running costs (e.g. heating and repairs etc) expected of new build properties compared with the general housing stock. Properties must be offered for sale with purchase shares starting at 30% of value and rental charges on unsold equity at less than or equal to the Homes and Communities Agency ceiling of 2.75% pa.

33. In addition, to keep overall valuations within acceptable levels, the design standards for intermediate home ownership properties should be equivalent to the standards used by the Homes and Communities Agency to determine eligibility for Social Housing Grant (or any subsequent Homes and Communities Agency or regulator standards).

On-Site Provision

34. With regard to whether provision should be on-site, off-site or the subject of a financial contribution in lieu the presumption is that affordable housing will be provided on the application site so that it contributes towards creating a mix of housing. However, where it can be robustly justified, off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision (of broadly equivalent value) may be accepted as long as the agreed approach contributes to the creation of mixed communities in the local authority area. This requirement is consistent with NPPF.

35. The size of development should not be artificially reduced to reduce or eliminate the affordable housing requirement as set out in the Core Strategy and at page 5 of this document, for example by sub-dividing sites or reducing the density of all or part of a site.
36. Where an element of affordable housing is required, at least 70% of the affordable housing units should be for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, unless the Council is satisfied that an alternative mix meets an independently assessed proven need and agrees to such alternative provision. The evidence to support an alternative mix will need to be provided by the applicant/ developer at their own cost.
37. Where affordable housing is provided the mix in terms of dwelling tenure, type and size must be incorporated which reflect the site's characteristics and the development as a whole. The Council will negotiate the exact tenure, type and size split on each site through pre-application discussions.
38. The provision of on-site affordable housing should be integrated into the layout of the development through 'pepper-potting' within private housing (see paragraphs 43 and 44 below). Within flatted developments it is accepted that management and other requirements could mean floors, wings or whole blocks will generally be designated for affordable or market housing or that on larger developments affordable housing is likely to be provided in small clusters around the development.
39. The Councils expect that affordable housing provided on site will be subject to the same standards of finish and presentation, which will be indistinguishable from the open market housing (see paragraph 6.30 relating to tenure blind development below). Such housing should comply with all relevant design and quality codes and standards set out by the Homes and Communities Agency or other relevant body, as well as relevant national and local guidance and standards.

F: Design of affordable housing

Current Requirements: Design and Quality Standards

40. In order to receive public subsidy for affordable housing in the form of Social Housing Grant (SHG) it is necessary for developments to meet minimum standards. These are set out in the Homes and Community Agency's (formerly the Housing Corporation) Design and Quality Standards.
41. All Homes and Communities Agency funded affordable housing will need to comply with the 2007 Design and Quality standards. The Code for Sustainable Homes, a mandatory government standard for England, is included within these new design requirements and recommendations.
42. The HCA Design and Quality Strategy accompanying the standards defines good design as 'desirable, affordable, high quality homes and environments, which benefit the individual and community'. It sits within the National Planning Policy Framework which requires good design, described as a key aspect of sustainable development..

Pepper-potting

43. Pepper-potting is commonly defined as the dispersal of affordable housing units within residential developments to promote mixed communities and minimise social exclusion. The overriding purpose of pepper-potting is to ensure affordable housing is fully integrated within market housing.
44. Generally, the higher the percentage of affordable housing required, the greater the need to ensure that it is integrated within the overall housing stock so that sustainable mixed community and social inclusion objectives are met. Developers are required to discuss at an early stage appropriate layout and phasing of development with the Local Planning Authority to ensure that affordable housing is dispersed throughout developments.

Tenure Blind Development

45. Affordable housing should be tenure blind in order to ensure its seamless integration within market housing development. The affordable housing should not be distinguishable from the market housing in terms of external appearance and quality and, therefore, the design and materials employed are to be consistent regardless of tenure.

Off-site provision

46. Following the National Planning Policy Framework it is presumed that affordable housing will be provided on the application site so that it contributes towards creating a mix of housing. However, where it can be robustly justified, off-site provision or a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision (of broadly equivalent value) may be accepted as long as the agreed approach contributes to the creation of mixed communities in the local authority area. Examples of robust justification, although not exclusive, include provision that will contribute to other policy objectives, for example enabling empty homes to be brought back into use or where the development location is unsuitable for affordable housing.
47. Where off-site provision is proposed, the calculation of units or commuted sum should take into account the fact that there is an increase in the market housing on the application site. For example, consider in simple terms a site accommodating 100 units, which would be 70 market houses and 30 affordable houses on-site. If the Local Planning Authority permits all the site to be developed for market housing and still only requires an on-site contribution of 30 units (or the financial equivalent thereof), it would only achieve 23% affordable housing. To achieve 30% affordable housing on a site of 100 units in the urban area (where the on-site provision would be 70 market and 30 affordable houses, and where the site is subsequently developed for 100 market houses, as above), the calculation of the 30% affordable houses should be based on 100 being 70% of the total as set out in the example below:

	Market housing	Affordable housing	Total
On-site affordable housing	70	30	100
Off-site contribution	100 (70%) Provided on site	43 (30%) Off-site contribution	143 (100%)

In the example above, in order to maintain the overall ratio of 30% affordable housing to 70% market housing, the number of affordable housing units provided off-site has to be increased to 43 .

48. The acceptance of financial contributions in lieu of on-site dwellings may be considered acceptable where the site is deemed by the Local Planning Authority to be unsuitable for affordable housing.

49. The calculation of commuted sums in lieu of on-site provision is as follows:

Average house price for locality and house type*

X

33% of open market value

X

Affordable housing requirement on-site (30% or 35% of total)

*To be agreed with developer based on the most recent quarter's verifiable publicly available data e.g. Land Registry price paid data for postcode sector..

Developers may, alternatively, use a residual value approach to determining the contribution. In such cases all costs, including those incurred by the Local Planning Authority in confirming valuations, will be borne by the developer.

50. Where it is proposed that the affordable housing provision should be on-site but where the calculated provision does not equate to whole units the actual provision will be rounded up or down to the nearest whole number.

G: Viability

51. Policy 7 of the Central Lancashire Core Strategy recognises that financial viability is a consideration in the delivery of affordable housing. Housing viability studies were carried out for the three Central Lancashire Authorities by Three Dragons Consultants in March 2010 as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy. Based on a residual development appraisal the studies concluded that the levels of affordable housing set out in Policy 7 of the Core Strategy were achievable with an acceptable return to the developer and landowner. Nevertheless, the study also concluded that there will be site-specific circumstances where achievement of the affordable housing proportions set out in Policy may not be possible. This should not detract from the

robustness of the overall targets but the council will need to take into account specific site viability concerns when these are justified.

52. If there is any doubt about viability on a particular site, it will be the responsibility of the developer to make a case that applying the Council's affordable housing requirement for their scheme makes the scheme **not viable**. Where the Council is satisfied this is the case, the Council has a number of options open to it including changing the mix of the affordable housing before needing to consider whether a lower level of affordable housing is appropriate. In individual scheme negotiations, the council will also need to consider the balance between seeking affordable housing and its other developer contribution requirements.
53. Where a developer or landowner considers that there are significant constraints sufficient to jeopardise or prevent them from meeting the Councils' affordable housing policy targets, this will need to be demonstrated by the submission of a suitable financial appraisal, which will be subject to testing by the Local Planning Authority at the developer's expense. The Councils will adopt an 'open book' approach to this assessment and the developer/landowner will be expected to provide all relevant financial and other information behind the appraisal to enable the Councils and/or independent valuer on their behalf to assess the nature, extent and impact of the constraints upon the viability of the scheme.
54. The provision of affordable housing, whether on or off-site or via a commuted sum will be secured through a S106 agreement. The Government is currently considering whether in future affordable housing should be included within the Community Infrastructure Levy and, if so, whether pooled contributions through S106 should be limited. Where affordable housing is to be delivered via a commuted sum, it is expected that the sum will be payable on commencement of the development, or other agreed timescale.

H: Rural Exceptions

55. In providing for affordable housing in rural communities the aim set out in NPPF is to be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs. Clear independent evidence of an identified local need for affordable housing is a prerequisite to considering whether, in line with NPPF, allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of affordable housing. Rural exceptions sites should provide 100% affordable housing as set out in Policy 7 of the Core Strategy. To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.
56. Rural exception sites should only be used for affordable housing in perpetuity. A Rural Exception Site policy should seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection, whilst also ensuring that rural areas continue to develop as sustainable, mixed, inclusive communities.
57. Ideally, homes should be built where there is good access to services, employment and other facilities, and the proposed site should lie within, or adjacent to, an established

settlement. If not, the landowner or developer will need to show that the requirements of the potential occupants can be met without putting undue pressure on existing service provision or the physical environment.

58. Schemes are more likely to be successful with the involvement, support and knowledge of the local community. Furthermore, robust evidence of local housing needs via a local housing needs assessment is essential for any scheme to go ahead: the type, tenure and size of the affordable homes must meet an identified local need.

I: Sustainability appraisal and habitats regulations assessment

59. Given the relationship between this SPD, the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations DPDs and the level of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) that these documents have undergone together with the anticipated absence of any significant environmental effects arising from this proposal, an independent SA of this Planning Framework SPD is not required. In addition, the Core Strategy has undergone a Habitats Regulations Screening Assessment to determine the likely significant effects of the plan on sites of international nature conservation importance. Given the SPD is in conformity with the policies contained within the Core Strategy, a full Screening Assessment of this SPD is not required.

J: Monitoring and Review

60. The Councils will monitor the effectiveness of this guidance including Core Strategy key indicators and review as appropriate in the light of its performance and future changes in planning law, and policy guidance.

K: Further Information

61. The SPD will primarily be implemented through the development management process and the determination of planning applications. Charges may apply for pre-application consultations; please see websites for details. Planning Officers will be pleased to provide advice and guidance on planning matters regarding affordable housing. They can be contacted on:

Local Authority	Website	Telephone	Email
Preston City Council	www.preston.gov.uk	01772 906949	devcon@preston.gov.uk
Chorley Council	www.chorley.gov.uk	01257 515151	dcon@chorley.gov.uk
South Ribble Borough Council	www.southribble.gov.uk	01772 421491	planning@southribble.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1: AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVIDERS

Registered Providers operating in the Central Lancashire area

Registered Provider	Address	Tel
Adactus Housing Association Ltd	Turner House, 56 King Street, Leigh, WN7 4LJ	01942 608715
Community Gateway	Deltic House, West Strand, Preston, PR1 8UY	0800 953 0213
Symphony Housing Group	16-18 Downing Street, Preston, PR1 4RE	01772 704713
Eaves Brook (part of Your Housing Group)	36 Ormskirk Road, Preston, PR1 2QP	01772 554470
Great Places Housing Group	Southern Gate, 729 Princess Road, Manchester, M20 2LT	0161 447 5077
The Places for People Group	4 The Pavilions, Port Way, Preston, PR2 2YB	01772 897200
New Progress Housing Association	Sumner House 21 King Street Leyland Lancashire PR25 2LW	01772 450600
Chorley Community Housing	Part of the Adactus Group – see above	
AccentGroup	The Martindales, Clayton-le-Woods, Chorley, PR6 7TJ	0845 678 0582

GLOSSARY

Affordable Housing Definitions (from NPPF):

Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Affordable rented housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.

Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

Rural Exception Site: A site that is within or adjoins existing rural communities which may be subject to policies of restraint, such as Green Belt, and which would not otherwise be released for housing, but may only be developed in order to provide affordable housing to meet local needs in perpetuity.

SHMA: Strategic Housing Market Assessment

HCA: Homes and Communities Agency, an agency of Government and successor body to both the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships