

Policy HOU2 b) contains a criteria that any scheme for local needs or specialist housing should have the support of the relevant parish Council. What is the justification for this given the different types of housing covered by the policy and the potential to effectively move decision-making away from the local planning authority?

The Council considers that the views of the Parish Council are particularly important, due to the type of development that is covered by the policy. The policy covers local needs affordable housing, and also subsidised specialist housing schemes. The policy does not relate to general market specialist housing schemes, which are covered by Policy HOU18. The definitions of the types of housing covered by this Policy are set out at paras 5.18 and 5.19 of SD01. In order to make it clearer which types of development the policy covers, the Council proposes amendments to the supporting text as set out below.

The policy relates to proposals which would not normally be permitted for housing, but where a specific local need is justified, they can be supported as exceptions. It is therefore important that a robust case for the local need is put forward and the Council considers that the relevant Parish Council's views form part of this.

The Parish Council should play an integral role in the development of such proposals, with this type of development normally being brought forward by a Housing Association working in close liaison with the Parish Council and Ashford Borough Council. The local need for such proposals should be identified through a local needs survey carried out by, or in close liaison with, the Parish Council. Given that the specific needs to be catered for is a local issue, the Parish Council should be well placed to provide a robust view on the need for the development. The Council therefore considers the Parish Council's views particularly important in determining the acceptability of the proposal.

It is not the intention of the criteria to move the decision-making away from the local planning authority. However the Council understands how the approach in the policy could result in difficulties, in a small minority of cases, where all other criteria have been met, but the Parish Council do not support the proposal.

The Council therefore proposes the deletion of clause b) from Policy HOU2. Given the importance of the involvement of the Parish Council, the Council propose amendments to the supporting text, in order to explain how it is expected that the Parish Council would be involved in schemes covered by this policy.

The following amendments are proposed to address the issues raised above:

- The addition of the word subsidised in the following places:
 - Para 5.17 before 'specialist housing schemes'
 - Para 5.19 before 'specialist housing schemes'
 - In the title before para 5.26.
- Deletion of 'has the support of the relevant Parish Council', from final bullet point of para 5.23
- Deletion of first sentence in para 5.24 and addition of the following text:

In practice this type of development is normally brought forward by a Housing Association working in close liaison with the relevant Parish Council and Ashford Borough Council. Given that the specific

need to be catered for is a local issue, the Parish Council should be well placed to provide a robust view on the need for the development. The Council therefore considers the Parish Council's views in relation to the need for the development particularly important in determining the acceptability of the proposal. It is expected that the Parish Council will play an integral role in the development of such proposals prior to it being submitted as a planning application; including involvement with the local needs survey.

- Deletion of criteria b) from Policy HOU2

4th June 2018