

CSC100: **CABINET REPORT – PLANNING OBLIGATIONS AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECENT GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT ON REVISED THRESHOLD**

Councillor Beales left the meeting during consideration of the item.

Councillor Foster asked the Portfolio Holder that, in order to avoid uncertainty, could he explain which policy in the Core Strategy the recommendation would alter.

Councillor Lawrence explained that this was a Government amendment and the Council did not have a choice but to implement the changes.

Councillor Foster commented that other councils Core Strategy document did not match with this Council's.

It was explained that this Council was within a designated rural area and had been given the choice to introduce a threshold of more than five units, whereas most other Councils had not been given that choice. Councillor Lawrence further explained that an amendment would be made once the recommendation had been ratified by full Council.

Councillor Foster asked for clarification on recommendation 1.b. as to whether the threshold applied to 5 units or above. The Portfolio Holder explained that it was above 5 units, ie. 6 – 10 and then 11 onwards.

Councillor Foster referred to paragraph 5.3 of the Cabinet report and stated that this had not been included within the recommendation. He further asked why it had not been put forward to change Policy CS09.

The Portfolio Holder explained that it was not possible at present to amend Policy CS09 but an explanation would be available for the public following full Council's resolution.

Councillor Joyce asked whether paragraph 5.3 should have been included within the recommendation that Cabinet made, to which Councillor Lawrence confirmed that it should not have been included.

Councillor Foster added that he had been contacted by an architect who could not understand the recommendation and he read out an example. Councillor Lawrence advised that the architect should be asked to contact officers who could clarify the situation.

Councillor Foster stated that it was a policy situation, and asked the Portfolio Holder whether the wording could have been simpler. The

Portfolio Holder responded that he did not think that the wording could have been simpler and added that it was not policy yet until the recommendations had been ratified by full Council.

Councillor Manley referred to the fact that a financial contribution would be made once development had taken place and suggested that if a developer was to go bust then the Council would not receive any financial contribution. The Portfolio Holder explained that as it stood today, affordable housing would need to be provided for 5 or more dwellings. The proposal would mean that a developer would be able to build one more property without the need for any contribution. For schemes 6 – 10 dwellings a developer would be required to provide a commuted sum, as opposed to built units as at present, and for 11 dwellings and above, the requirement would be for the developer to provide dwellings. He added that clear guidelines had tried to be set. He further added that there was also a need to keep a supply of affordable housing. He explained that if a developer was to go bust then the obligation would be with the land and not the developer.

Councillor Collop asked whether the financial contributions on sites above 5 dwellings, could be spent elsewhere and not in the village/parish where the development had taken place. In response, the Portfolio Holder explained that the financial contribution would allow the Council to place the affordable housing where it was needed ie as an exceptions site.

The Housing Strategy Officer explained that having a financial contribution would allow the Council to control where the money was spent. She further explained that some villages and hamlets may not have a need for affordable housing. However, further consideration would be given on how that money was to be spent.

Councillor Joyce asked the Portfolio Holder if the money made through financial contributions would be ring fenced for affordable housing, which the Portfolio Holder confirmed that it would.

Councillor Collop stated that it would be important for Councillors to know where this money would be used, and asked the Portfolio Holder if this was going to happen. The Portfolio Holder explained that information would be provided to Councillors via the Members Bulletin.

The Housing Strategy Officer added that in relation to on-site provision the Council had tried to put money back into the village it came from through the creation of exception sites.

Councillor Tilbury asked for clarification in relation to the threshold of 5 units and asked when a sum would be payable. The Portfolio Holder explained that currently it was for 5 dwellings but if ratified at full Council it would become payable for the 6th dwelling.

It was suggested that recommendation 1.b. was very unclear and an alternative form of words should be sought to help the public understand the changes.

It was proposed and seconded that the wording in recommendation 1.b. should be amended to read:

b. For all remaining settlements apply a threshold of 5 units *above which* a financial contribution will be sought towards affordable housing rather than on site provision as is currently the case.

After having been put to the vote, the amendment was agreed.

RECOMMENDED: That recommendation 1.b. should be amended to read:

b. For all remaining settlements apply a threshold of 5 units *above which* a financial contribution will be sought towards affordable housing rather than on site provision as is currently the case.