

**DELEGATED**

**AGENDA NO  
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**27th June 2007**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF  
DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD  
SERVICES**

**07/0943/FUL**

**Former Roseworth Public House, Redhill Road/Ragpath Lane, Roseworth  
Erection of three storey apartment block comprising of 18 no. one bedroom  
apartments and 12 no. two bedroom apartments**

**Expiry Date: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

### **Summary**

Planning permission is sought for the demolition of an existing disused Public House and a development of 30 apartments, in a three-storey block. The scheme includes parking, bin store provision whilst has grassed areas and indicative tree planting shown.

The application site is a brownfield site located within the limits to development and within a defined neighbourhood centre where the principle of residential development is accepted subject to several criteria including there being no detrimental impact to the vitality and viability of the retailing function of the centre. In view of the former use of the site as a Public House and it been vacant for an extended period, it is considered that residential development on the site would be acceptable. The site is located within close proximity to a range of services and public transport routes and as such is considered to be a sustainable location for flatted development, being in accordance with the locational guidance of Supplementary Planning Guidance Note No. 4 relating to flatted development.

Objections and concerns have been raised from mainly internal sources regarding the scale and height of the development, which considered the building to be out of keeping with the surrounding area, overbearing on surrounding properties and the possible loss of privacy. It is further advised that the development should include an area within the development for a shared seating / courtyard area for use by the residents.

The Councils Urban design Team have advised that adequate parking spaces have been provided for the development although advise that contributions are required as well as additional information relating to a swept path analysis and the provision of a pedestrian link form the site.

The proposal is considered to constitute an over development of the site, being excessive in its overall scale and massing and as a result of their being insufficient on site amenity space. The overall design, although of good quality is not considered to respect the surrounding environment and it would therefore be out of character with its surroundings. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposed development does not make adequate provision for amenity space, affordable housing or parking.

## RECOMMENDATION

Planning application 07/0943/FUL be Refused for the following reasons: -

- 01. *In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed development is of a scale, density and design which is not representative of other surrounding development in terms of heights, styles and overall massing whilst its layout would leave minimal areas of green space. As such, it is considered that the resultant development will be an overly dominant and incongruous feature within the street scene which does not take into account the character and appearance of the surrounding area, contrary to the requirements of Policies GP1, HO3 and HO11 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan and Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing.***
- 02. *In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed development does not adequately provide for formal and informal open space as a result of there being limited on site provision and there being no legal agreement securing off site provision in lieu of on site provision. As such, the proposed development is considered to be contrary to the requirements of Policies HO3 and HO11 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.***
- 03. *In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed development does not adequately provide for affordable housing as a result of no on site provision being made and there being no legal agreement securing off site provision in lieu of on site provision. As such, the proposed development is considered to be contrary to the requirements of Planning Policy Statement No. 3 Housing.***
- 04. *In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed development does not adequately provide provision of parking and access as a result of their being no contribution in place to monitor and provide for on street parking or for highway works in the form of hard standing to be undertaken, therefore being contrary to Policies GP1 and HO11 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.***

### **Informative**

***Northumbrian Water have advised that were the Local Planning Authority minded to approve the application then a condition should be imposed in respect to no development commencing until a scheme has been agreed with respect to the diversion of apparatus within the site in order to prevent the building over of a public sewer which runs across the site. It is therefore advised that in consideration of any revised proposal that contact is made to discuss this matter with Northumbrian Water.***

## BACKGROUND

1. Details were submitted at a pre application stage and a copy of the advice given by officer's forms appendix reference 1. Advice basically indicates that the development of 30 apartments on the site constitutes an over development of the site, that the access and parking were inadequate, that the site was cramped, having insufficient amenity space. Suggestions were made including a reduced scale of development, the provision of adequate parking and turning, increased amenity space, more useful planting areas as well as details to break up the massing of the

elevations. The applicant's agent has been attempting to address these matters throughout the course of the application.

## **THE PROPOSAL**

2. Planning permission is sought for the redevelopment of a site currently occupied by a vacant Public House. The redevelopment scheme proposes the erection of 30 one and two bedroom apartments with associated parking and other details.
3. The application was submitted on the 11th April 2007 with a Design and Access Statement, a Statement of Community Involvement, and the relevant plans and elevations. In addition to these details, and following request, street scene elevation plans were submitted on the 24th May 2007 and a Transport Statement was submitted on the 29th May along with amended layout and elevation plans.
4. The latest revision to the scheme retains 30no. apartments within the 0.2 hectare site (overall density 150 dwellings per hectare) whilst provides 38 no. parking spaces (ratio of 1.26 spaces per unit). The development is in one L shaped block of development, which returns around the corner of the site with parking to the rear. Elevations have been reduced in height and although providing three floors of development throughout the site, the eaves level falls below the upper height of the 2nd floor windows.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

The following Consultations were notified and any comments they made are below:

### Urban Design – Landscape

5. Some concerns regarding the scale and height of the development, recommendations below. No objection in principle but further information is required: Full hard and soft landscape details should be provided to the following minimum standard: A detailed landscape plan for hard construction indicating materials and construction methods, detailed treatments of the enclosures to all boundaries, Tree planting details, including species, stock size and planting methods. I also recommend that the applicant indicates an area within the development for a shared seating / courtyard area for use by the residents.

### Urban Design – Engineers

6. The departure from standard form for the parking provision of 1.25 spaces per apartment is acceptable. However, a section 106 contribution of £6,000 should be made to hardstand the verge outside 116-118 Ragpath Lane. This is to remove on street parking and ensure vehicles are able to access the site; in addition a swept path analysis for vehicles turning right into the site is required. A bond of £6,000 should also be conditioned, to enable on street parking to be monitored once the development is complete, which if found necessary will be used to hard stand the verge on Ragpath Lane outside the development frontage. If not found necessary the bond will be returned within two years. A pedestrian link onto Ragpath Lane from the proposed development should be provided.

### Urban Design – Built Environment

7. The revised street elevation provides a better change in level to the overall massing of the development, however, the proposal is still too high at the ends of the building

where it is required to make seamless transition between new and existing. It is recommended that the applicant reduces the height of the last 2 units and stairwell on both the Ragpath Lane and Redhill Road elevations.

#### Councillors

8. Councillor Inman -

I have no objections in principle to the development of the above site but am concerned about the height of the planned development which is not in keeping with the rest of the nearby properties and which may impinge on the privacy of some of the residents living close to the site.

9. Councillor Leonard (Firmer Ward Councillor who was a Ward Councillor when the application was first submitted) -

Whilst I have no problem with the planning application to build flats on the former Roseworth Public House site in principle, I am very concerned that the proposed application appears to be overbearing in comparison to the surrounding buildings.

Whilst the proposed scheme is three storeys high and consists of thirty apartments, all the other buildings in the area are two storeys high and the development will look out of place. I would personally prefer to see the height of the development reduced to 2 or 2 ½ storeys high and a reduction in the number of apartments to between 20 and 24.

#### Environmental Health Unit

10. No objection in principle, however, recommend conditions relating to Noise disturbance between living accommodation, land contamination and construction noise.

#### Northumbrian Water Limited

11. Request a condition is imposed to any approval relating to the moving of apparatus to avoid building over.

#### Northern Gas Networks

12. No objections

#### NEDL

13. No Objections

No responses were received from the following consultees: -

#### Care For Your Area

Stockton Police Station - Eddie Lincoln

### **PUBLICITY**

Neighbours were notified and comments received are below: -

Sharon Woodhouse by Email

We are not against the new flats but are against a 3-storey building as we feel it would intrude on our privacy and we feel a 3-storey building is not in keeping with other buildings in the surrounding area.

## **PLANNING POLICY CONSIDERATION**

The relevant development plan in this case is the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant Development Plans are the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), Tees Valley Structure Plan (TVSP) and the Stockton on Tees Local Plan (STLP).

### **Policy GP1**

Proposals for development will be assessed in relation to the policies of the Cleveland Structure Plan and the following criteria as appropriate:

- (i) The external appearance of the development and its relationship with the surrounding area;
- (ii) The effect on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties;
- (iii) The provision of satisfactory access and parking arrangements;
- (iv) The contribution of existing trees and landscape features;
- (v) The need for a high standard of landscaping;
- (vi) The desire to reduce opportunities for crime;
- (vii) The intention to make development as accessible as possible to everyone;
- (viii) The quality, character and sensitivity of existing landscapes and buildings;
- (ix) The effect upon wildlife habitats;
- (x) The effect upon the public rights of way network.

### **Policy HO3**

Within the limits of development, residential development may be permitted provided that:

- (i) The land is not specifically allocated for another use; and
- (ii) The land is not underneath electricity lines; and
- (iii) It does not result in the loss of a site which is used for recreational purposes; and
- (iv) It is sympathetic to the character of the locality and takes account of and accommodates important features within the site; and
- (v) It does not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to adjacent land users; and
- (vi) Satisfactory arrangements can be made for access and parking.

### **Policy HO11**

New residential development should be designed and laid out to:

- (i) Provide a high quality of built environment which is in keeping with its surroundings;
- (ii) Incorporate open space for both formal and informal use;
- (iii) Ensure that residents of the new dwellings would have a satisfactory degree of privacy and amenity;
- (iv) Avoid any unacceptable effect on the privacy and amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties;
- (v) Pay due regard to existing features and ground levels on the site;
- (vi) Provide adequate access, parking and servicing;
- (vii) Subject to the above factors, to incorporate features to assist in crime prevention.

### **Policy S1**

As defined on the Proposals Map, the Council will seek to direct new retail development and other town centre uses within the centres in the following local retail hierarchy of the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council area in order to protect and enhance their vitality and viability: -

- A) Stockton-on-Tees Town Centre

- B) The District Centres:
- C) The Local Centres:
- D) The Neighbourhood Centres at:  
25) Redhill Road, Stockton;

All proposals for development should be appropriate in terms of the scale, nature and character to the centre's existing role and the catchment area which it serves.

#### Policy S10

Proposals for change of use from retailing (Used Class A1) within the defined boundaries of the Local and Neighbourhood Centres identified on the Proposals Map will be resisted, unless it can be demonstrated that: -

- i) The character, vitality and viability of the Centre will not be adversely affected as a retailing centre;
- ii) Reasonable efforts have been made to market the premises for retail uses;
- iii) It is appropriate in scale and function to the Centre;

### **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 14. The application site lies to the northern area of Stockton, within Roseworth. The character of the surrounding area is defined by the layout and style of the area as a former Council built development which consists mainly of two storey semi detached properties with front and rear garden areas. There is a shopping parade and Sure Start building immediately to the east of the site along Redhill Road, a Dentists Surgery occupying the property immediately to the north with housing and a small church to the east and south.
- 15. The site is currently occupied by the Roseworth Public House and its associated hard surfacing which wraps around the entirety of the site. The Public House is no longer in use whilst the building has been boarded up. Several trees are located along the northern and western boundaries with adjoining uses.

### **MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 16. The application relates to a brownfield site within the limits of development and within a Neighbourhood Centre as defined within the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan. Policy H03 guides in respect to new residential development and the proposed development generally meets the requirements of Policy HO3 in that the site does not lie under electricity lines and should not result in the loss of a site used for recreational purposes. However, the site is allocated as a defined Neighbourhood centre and as such the proposal needs to be assessed against the guidance of Policies S1 and S10 of Alteration No. 1 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan which relate to retail provision. The key considerations with respect to the proposed development are its impact on the defined neighbourhood centre, the location of flatted development, the site layout, design, access and parking, impact on surrounding properties and provision of amenity space. These, and other remaining matters are considered as follows;

## **Impact on the Defined Neighbourhood Centre**

17. The site falls within the Redhill Road Neighbourhood Centre as defined within Policy S1 of Alteration no. 1 of the Local Plan. Policy S1 requires new retail development to be focussed within the hierarchy of defined centres in order to protect and enhance their vitality and viability in view of them providing local services for surrounding residential areas and playing a valuable role in providing convenience and top up shopping. Policy S10 of Alteration No.1 protects the loss of retail premises from the defined centres to other uses advising that the loss of such units should only be acceptable under specific criteria. This criteria requires the character, vitality and viability of the Centre to not be adversely affected as a retailing centre, for reasonable efforts to have been made to market the premises and for the resultant development to be appropriate in scale and function to the Centre.
18. In view of the former use of the site as a public house and their being no loss to any retail units within the defined centre, it is considered that the loss of the building would not unduly affect the vitality and viability of the centre, particularly as the site is somewhat divorced from the parade of retail units. Furthermore, the premises is closed and has been for an extended period during which time it has been marketed for sale. In view of these factors it is considered the redevelopment of the site for non retail uses would accord with Policy S10.

## **Location of Flatted Development**

19. Supplementary Planning Guidance Note no. 4 relating to the locating of flatted development requires new flatted development schemes such as this to be located on brownfield land within the defined limits to development and within 500m of a stop on a main bus route with a regular service. In view of the site being within the defined neighbourhood centre boundary on brownfield land, within the limits to development and within 100m of a bus route, it is considered that the development accords with the guidance of SPG 4.

## **Site Layout**

20. The site is laid out having an L shaped block of development, which runs along the road frontage of Ragpath Lane and returns around the corner with Redhill Road. The access to the site is at the location of the existing access into the public house car park. Parking is provided along the northern edge of the site, adjacent to the access road and to the rear of the development. During the course of the application amendments have been made to provide amenity spacing between the ground floor flats and the car park, to provide an external cycle store along the western boundary and to relocate the bin store further back into the site. These amendments have resulted in an improved layout and level of provision as well as improved privacy and amenity for future residents of the development. However, these changes have reduced the overall level of usable amenity space within the scheme, which was already limited.
21. The site achieves a density of 150 dwellings per hectare, which although achieving some of government's aims with respect to sustainability, does so at the cost to the provision of amenity green space. It is considered that the overall development would be dominated by hard surfacing and would not positively contribute to the appearance or character of the area. (See appendix ref. 2). Although the existing public house already has a mass of hard surfacing, it is considered the relatively

small scale of the building itself, does not result in an over dominant form of development.

### **Design of apartment buildings**

22. The design of the proposed apartment block has been amended since its initial submission to achieve a lower height and more varied roof line through having two different eaves and ridge levels whilst create a splayed corner detail onto the junction of Ragpath Lane and Redhill Road and additional changes in the appearance of elevations. These are all considered to be positive amendments, however, it remains to be considered that the building has a design, which is out of keeping with the surrounding area, which is a former council built development. It is considered that any development of the site should not necessarily copy the design and appearance of the existing properties but instead, propose a new form of development, which can compliment and improve the existing character of the area. It is considered however, that the proposed development, with its high eaves levels and roof lines and the vertical proportions of windows all contribute to a scheme which has no direct relationship with the surrounding area. It is considered that these matters could be addressed through relatively minor changes, although adequate change has not been achieved.

### **Access, parking and general highways matters**

23. The site is proposed to be accessed at the same point as the existing public house, at a point within close proximity to the Ragpath Lane and Redhill Road Junction as well as the immediately opposing junction of Rosedale and the staggered junction of Ramsbury Avenue (see appendix ref.3). It is advised that a swept path analysis for vehicles turning right into the site is required as well as a pedestrian link onto Ragpath Lane from the proposed development. Details of these have been forwarded to the agent should they wish to address these matters prior to determination at committee.
24. The proposed layout provides a total of 38 spaces for the development which is shown to have a mix of 12no. 1 bed and 18no. 2 bed apartments, therefore averaging 1.26 spaces per apartment, (including any requirements for visitor parking). The Councils Supplementary Planning Document for parking provision recommends 1.5 spaces are required per unit, therefore totalling 45 spaces for the entire development, however, advises that a reduction of up to 0.25 can be acceptable. The Urban Design Team consider the proposed parking levels are acceptable in view of the sites location with respect to public transport links, schools and the nearby shopping parade which are all within walking distance from the site. However, a section 106 contribution of £6,000 is requested in order to hardstand the verge outside 116-118 Ragpath Lane in order to remove on street parking problems and ensure vehicles are able to access the site. In addition, a bond of £6,000 should also be conditioned, to enable on street parking to be monitored once the development is complete, which if found necessary will be used to hard stand the verge on Ragpath Lane outside the development frontage. If not found necessary the bond will be returned within two years.
25. The bin store has been set back into the site, away from the access point whilst turning has been laid out within the site which should allow refuse vehicles either to enter the site and empty the bins or alternatively empty them from Ragpath Lane in a similar fashion to other properties along this section of highway.



## **Impact on surrounding properties and uses**

26. The site lies adjacent to a Sure Start building and Dental Surgery with Ragpath Lane and Redhill Road on the other two sides. Beyond these highways lies residential properties. The proposed development would achieve approximately 24m and 28m between elevations from properties to the east and south respectively. The proposed development is considered to achieve adequate spacing from the Sure Start building to the west and the dentists to the north in view of these buildings main orientation facing the adjacent highways and in part being adjacent to the car park areas of the proposed development.

## **Formal Open Space**

27. The proposed development incorporates a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments and in accordance with Local Plan Policy HO11 is required to provide open space for both formal and informal use. As discussed earlier within the report, it is considered that there is insufficient amenity green space within the site, in addition to which, there is no open space provided for formal use. The applicant has agreed to payment of a commuted sum of £7000 in lieu of any on site provision being provided which would contribute to provision of formal open space elsewhere within the locality although no legal document has been provided or signed to ensure this is achieved.

## **Affordable Housing**

28. Local Plan Policy H04 requires the provision of affordable housing on sites over 2 hectares; however, PPS 3 (Housing) has been published since the adoption of the Local Plan, which offers updated guidance on the delivery and requirement for affordable housing. PPS 3 has a presumption that the housing will be delivered on site, facilitating the government's objectives of creating sustainable, mixed communities. The guidance also requires that policy sets out justification for off-site provision, or an equivalent financial contribution in-lieu of on site provision, providing these continue to make a contribution to the delivery of mixed communities. Para 29. of PPS 3:Housing states that the minimum site size threshold for affordable housing provision should be 15 dwellings, although this may be lower in some areas, where this is viable and practicable (see appendix ref: 4). PPS 3 is required to be taken account of as a material consideration in determining planning applications after the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007.
29. The Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) recommended that 9% of all new housing development over the next five years be classed as affordable, which equates to 200 actual dwellings over the same period. However, since some smaller sites may be unable to deliver any affordable dwellings, it is recommended that overall, 15% of all new residential development is affordable. This figure is solely concerned with newly arising need, and will be updated annually. Although this figure appears to be low, it has to take account of some permissions taking a long time to progress from application stage to a built and occupied stage.
30. Given the advice in PPS3 and the LHNA, the Councils Housing Team have advised that they will actively pursue a target of 15% affordable housing on sites with 15 or more dwellings proposed. The request for the provision of on site affordable

housing has been made, although there is no legal agreement in place to achieve this. As such, in view of the lack of provision being made, it is considered that the proposed development would be contrary to the guidance of Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing.

## **CONCLUSION**

31. It is considered that the general principle of residential development on the site accords with Policy HO3 of the Local Plan as well as national guidance in the form of PPS3. However, it is considered that the density of the proposed scheme and its resultant layout would result in a form of development which would be out of keeping with the surrounding area which is in part characterised by smaller blocks of built development amongst green open spaces. It is considered that there are a number of issues with the site, which as single issues may not be significant, however, group to result in a development which would be an incongruous feature within the street scene, being of an increased height, of increased massing, of a different design, projecting beyond established building lines and having significant expanses of hard surfacing.
32. It is considered that all of these individual elements result in a proposal which does not adequately reflect the character and appearance of the surrounding area whilst would not adequately provide for the future occupants of the site with regard to outdoor amenity green space. Although PPS3 advocates high density developments, it also requires developments to provide or enable good access to green and open amenity and recreational space (including play space) as well as private outdoor space such as residential gardens, patios and balconies and be well integrated with, and complement the neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally in terms of scale, density, layout and access. It is considered that this proposal would therefore be contrary to the guidance of PPS 3.
33. Although the applicant has agreed to the provision of a commuted sum in lieu of on site formal open space, as there is no legal agreement in place for this, then there is no clear ability for the council to achieve provision and as such, the proposed development would be contrary to Policy HO11 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.
34. It is considered that S106 contributions are required in respect to the provision of affordable housing and highways works in order to ensure the application adequately provides for the future occupants and is in accordance with the guidance of Planning Policy Statement 3 (Housing). Such agreements have not been made and as such there is no clear ability for the council to achieve their provision.

**Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services**  
**Contact Officer Mr Andrew Glossop**  
**Telephone No 01642 527796**  
**Email address [development.control@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:development.control@stockton.gov.uk)**

### **Human Rights Implications**

The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report

### **Financial Implications**

None

**Community Implications**

As reported

**Ward**

**Ward Councillor**

**Ward Councillor**

**Roseworth**

**Councillor J Beall**

**Councillor Miss B Inman BEd BA ADPSE**

Letter sent to agent (2<sup>nd</sup> January 2007) based on scheme submitted at pre application stage

Following consideration of the proposed development as listed above; i can advise you of the following comments from the Councils One stop Shop.

The junction spacing appears to be inadequate and the scheme would effectively create a cross roads with Rosedale Gardens, there is insufficient parking 1.5 spaces per unit is required whilst each space should not be encroached upon by planting. There is no turning facility for service vehicles, which would need to be provided. In addition, a transport statement would be required to be submitted as part of any application for development.

There is a lack of amenity space which results in a cramped over development of the site. Trees would struggle to grow in the indicated parking bay plant zones therefore only allowing for shrubs. This would lead to the building and its hard surfacing dominating the street scene, which is not considered to be suitable.

There may be a requirement for an offsite contribution towards a community facility in view of the loss of this existing facility, although the final proposal and any justification towards the loss of the facility would impact on this requirement.

A desk study for contaminated land would be required whilst any scheme would need to adequately control transmission of sound between apartments.

The bin store would be a prominent feature within the street scene and should be set further back into the site.

In view of all of the above comments i would suggest that any proposed development would need to be at a reduced scale, incorporate adequate parking and turning, consider the point of access in more detail whilst increase the area of amenity space and areas for useful planting. In addition to the above, previous discussions suggested a more active street scene elevation and methods imposed to break up of the massing of the development as well as a reasoned justification relating to the loss of the community facility. Furthermore, in any future plans it would be beneficial to view some street scene elevations of the proposed development so that their context within the surrounding environment can be fully considered.

29. In Local Development Documents, Local Planning Authorities should:

- Set an overall (i.e. plan-wide) **target** for the amount of affordable housing to be provided.

The target should reflect the new definition of affordable housing in this PPS.<sup>19</sup> It should also reflect an assessment of the likely economic viability of land for housing within the area, taking account of risks to delivery and drawing on informed assessments of the likely levels of finance available for affordable housing, including public subsidy and the level of developer contribution that can reasonably be secured.

Local Planning Authorities should aim to ensure that provision of affordable housing meets the needs of both current and future occupiers, taking into account information from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

**Set separate targets for social-rented and intermediate affordable housing** where appropriate. A sufficient supply of intermediate affordable housing can help address the needs of key workers and those seeking to gain a first step on the housing ladder, reduce the call on social-rented housing, free up existing social-rented homes, provide wider choice for households and ensure that sites have a mix of tenures.

- **Specify the size and type of affordable housing** that, in their judgement, is likely to be needed in particular locations and, where appropriate, on specific sites. This will include considering the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and any specific requirements, such as the provision of amenity and play space for family housing, and, where relevant, the need to integrate the affordable housing into the existing immediate neighbourhood and wider surrounding area.

- **Set out the range of circumstances in which affordable housing will be required.**

The national indicative minimum site size threshold is 15 dwellings. However, Local Planning Authorities can set lower minimum thresholds, where viable and practicable, including in rural areas. This could include setting different proportions of affordable housing to be sought for a series of site-size thresholds over the plan area. Local Planning Authorities will need to undertake an informed assessment of the economic viability of any thresholds and proportions of affordable housing proposed, including their likely impact upon overall levels of housing delivery and creating mixed communities.

In particular, as the new definition of affordable housing excludes low-cost market housing, in deciding proportions of affordable housing to be sought in different circumstances, Local Planning Authorities should take account of the need to deliver low cost market housing as part of the overall housing mix.

- **Set out the approach to seeking developer contributions** to facilitate the provision of affordable housing. In seeking developer contributions, 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.

