

## Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) FAQs

**The Council has prepared a draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to support the delivery of the adopted Affordable Housing Policy (Policy SP5 of [Dover District Local Plan to 2040](#)) and other related policies.**

**The SPD is intended to provide guidance and advice on how the policies should be implemented in practice through the planning process. It will replace the current adopted [Affordable Housing SPDs, First Homes Position Statement and the 2002 Local Exception SPG](#).**

**This consultation is seeking views on 12 Guidance Notes contained within the SPD in relation to the practical implementation of Policy SP5, taking into account recent changes in national policy and national issues with delivery of affordable housing.**

### What is Affordable Housing?

Affordable housing includes homes for sale or rent and is for people whose needs are not met by the private market. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines the types (tenures) of affordable housing [here](#).

The majority of affordable housing is owned and managed by registered providers (RP). There are three main types of RPs: not-for-profit RPs (known as Housing Associations), for profit RPs and local authorities (the Council's housing team). The activities of RPs are overseen by the Regulator of Social Housing. Other types of affordable home ownership products such as Discount Market Sale or First Homes can be brought forward by developers themselves.

Securing affordable housing in the district is a priority of the Council, and the provision of affordable housing secured through new development is a significant and important contributor to this, alongside the Council's own delivery.

### What are Supplementary Planning Documents?

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide more detailed advice or guidance in relation to policies in the adopted Local Plan. They usually focus on a particular issue – e.g., Affordable Housing, or a geographical area and are intended to help with the interpretation and implementation of our planning policies.

Once they are adopted, they are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Planning officers and the planning committee will look at whether development proposals are consistent with the advice in relevant SPDs when assessing planning applications and deciding whether planning permission should be granted.

## Are SPDs being replaced?

Yes, it is intended that SPDs will be replaced with Supplementary Plans in the future as a new Plan making system is being brought in by the government.

The legislation states that any new SPDs being brought forward under the legacy (outgoing) system must be adopted by 30 June 2026. It is the Council's intention to meet this deadline.

SPDs adopted by this deadline will remain in force until the local planning authority adopts a new-style local plan. DDC does not yet have a timetable for producing a plan in the new system and this SPD will support the current adopted Local Plan.

## Consultation on SPDs

The [Statement of Community Involvement \(SCI\) 2025](#) sets out how we will engage on SPDs as they are being prepared. **This stage is the formal 4-week consultation period, where we invite comments from all interested parties.** We are particularly interested in the views of local stakeholders, developers and agents and Registered Providers of Affordable Housing.

## What is included in the draft SPD?

The SPD includes 12 guidance notes that seek to address current issues and challenges in delivering affordable housing. In summary they cover:

### 1. Calculating 30% of development

Policy SP5 requires 30% on-site affordable housing on qualifying schemes. This can result in part unit requirements. This guidance note sets out that the calculation will be rounded to the nearest whole number (i.e. down for less than .5 and up for .5 or over).

### 2. Flexibility in Tenure Mix

Policy SP5 sets specific percentages for the tenure mix of affordable housing required. It is not flexible and requires a full viability appraisal to be submitted if that specific tenure mix is not achieved. The Government has made changes to the NPPF in relation to affordable housing tenures since the Local Plan was adopted.

To be more flexible on tenure mix changes where the proposal delivers 30% on-site, this guidance note sets out other tenure mixes that would be acceptable to the council without the need for a viability appraisal.

### 3. Housing Size, Design and Layout

This guidance note requires consideration of affordable housing needs to inform the housing size, design and layout of a scheme and recommends early engagement with

the council, with the aim of delivering schemes to meet local needs and that the council's housing team or a Registered Provider can take on.

#### **4. Evidence of Practicality Issues in delivery**

Policy SP5 does not allow for consideration of practical issues that make it impossible to meet the policy requirements, such as where there is no interest from any Registered Provider. This guidance note acknowledges these issues may exist and sets out the evidence that is required to demonstrate the issue. If this position is accepted, the council will consider an off-site financial contribution and/or alternative low-cost home ownership product.

#### **5. Viability Appraisals**

Policy SP5 already sets out flexibility where a scheme is demonstrated to be unviable, with a series of options to change the affordable housing requirements. This guidance note adds information on what is expected in viability appraisals submitted to the council, including who should prepare them, what they should contain and how they will be reviewed.

#### **6. When and how to agree Affordable Housing details**

This guidance note sets out what information is expected to be provided with planning applications in relation to affordable housing on development proposals, for different types of applications.

#### **7. Self and Custom Build Schemes**

This guidance note confirms that schemes that include this house type are still required to meet the SP5 requirements and that these types of properties do not count towards meeting affordable housing needs.

#### **8. Specialist and Older Persons Housing Schemes**

This guidance note clarifies that all schemes that fall within C3 uses are required to provide affordable housing and that some C2 uses, which may, for example, include age restricted dwellings or units which are independent even with a level of care provision, are required to contribute to affordable housing provision.

#### **9. Formula for calculating off-site contributions**

The current SPD formula, requiring a contribution of 5% of the Gross Development Value (GDV) is not providing sufficient funding to enable the council to deliver an equivalent number of affordable units off-site. This guidance note proposes increasing the requirement from 5% to 10% of GDV.

#### **10. Deferred Contributions**

In cases where viability appraisal evidence has been accepted and affordable housing has been removed or reduced on a scheme, this guidance notes set out the requirement for a review mechanism (often referred to as claw back). It requires that once the houses are built, a review of the actual sales values is carried out, and a proportion of any increase is paid to the Council to contribute to the delivery of affordable housing.

## 11. Keeping Shared Ownership in Perpetuity

This guidance note intends to prevent shared ownership properties secured through development from staircasing to 100% property ownership in certain areas of the district (Designated Protected Areas). This is intended to keep these properties available as affordable housing in perpetuity in the locations they are most needed and not allow them to become part of open market housing.

## 12. Rural Local Needs Housing

Policy H2 in the Local Plan applies to local needs housing applications, where they are proposed by local parish councils or community groups and are permitted where they are meeting evidenced local needs. This note adds some detail to that policy in relation to how to undertake a local housing needs assessment and how cross market subsidy is considered.

## How do I respond and when is the deadline?

You can view the documents online here in our [consultation portal](#). Alternatively, there are hard copies of the documents and comment forms available at a number of locations. Please see the [Statement of Representation Procedure](#) for more information.

We are inviting comments specifically on the 12 guidance notes, and there is also an option to comment on other parts of the draft SPD.

**The consultation period is open until midnight on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026.**

## What happens next?

We will carefully consider all comments and feedback and commence production of a final version of the SPD. This will be presented to cabinet and council for adoption in June. As part of this, the consultation statement will be updated setting out how comments received as part of this engagement stage were considered and taken into account in the final version of the SPD.

Following adoption, the SPD will be available on the council's website and will be used to help determine planning applications as a 'material consideration'.