

Fylde Council,
Planning Policy Team,

SENT BY EMAIL
planningpolicy@fylde.gov.uk
29/06/2021

Dear Planning Policy Team,

FYLDE LOCAL PLAN: PARTIAL REVIEW

1. Thank you for consulting with the Home Builders Federation (HBF) on Policy H2 of the Local Plan Partial Review.
2. The HBF is the principal representative body of the house-building industry in England and Wales. Our representations reflect the views of our membership, which includes multi-national PLC's, regional developers and small, local builders. In any one year, our members account for over 80% of all new "for sale" market housing built in England and Wales as well as a large proportion of newly built affordable housing.
3. The Council have provided three potential options in relation to Policy H2:
 - Option 1 - No change to the existing policy
 - Option 2 - Minimal change to the existing policy
 - Option 3 - Changes to address all issues raised
4. Option 1 is to retain the policy as is. The HBF is concerned that this policy is now no longer in line with the NPPF definition of 'Older People' or with the updates to the PPG in relation to housing for older and disabled people. It is also clear from the discussions that took place at the examination that the policy is not in line with the NPPF requirements of section 16(d) which states that policies should be clearly written and unambiguous, and it is not evident how the decision maker should react to the development proposals for older person housing. There was clearly a difference in relation to the how the policy was considered at the previous examination and how it was interpreted at that time, to how it is potentially now being considered by the Council as a development management policy. This is not addressed by the retention of the policy in its current form.
5. Option 2 sees the Council make some small changes to the policy, these include adding sub-headings to the policy and removing the reference to 'purpose built'. It also sees the Council change the emphasis of the sentence in relation to where affordable housing contributions will not be sought by inserting 'as defined in this section'. This then limits where affordable housing contributions will not be sought to the types of older persons housing where they meet the list of criteria set by the Council. This is a change to the existing policy, and whilst it does add more clarity, this change has not been consulted upon with the wider public and stakeholders and has not been subject to viability assessment, as this was not how the policy had been interpreted at the previous



examination. The policy could also be limiting on the provision of older persons housing and on the variety of provision and providers, this may go against what the Council are seeking to achieve. Therefore, the HBF considers that the proposed policy change is not appropriate and not sound.

6. Option 3 sees more changes provided within the policy. It removes reference to accommodation and elderly and amends the wording to 'older people'. However, there the policy then changes from 'older people' to 'specific needs of older people' to 'older people with specific needs', this use is inconsistent and adds confusion to the policy, the HBF considers it would simpler and more effective just to refer to 'older people'. This is considered more in line with the NPPF and PPG which highlight the diverse needs of older people.
7. The policy then goes on to amend the introduction to the criteria which will be used to consider housing for older people. Again, rather than simplifying the policy or adding clarity or simply updating the text to be more in line with NPPF, the proposed amendments appear inappropriate and many of them unnecessary. For example, it is not clear why it has been necessary to insert 'consisting solely of' or 'all of the criteria I to iv below are met'.
8. The policy is then further amended and appears to move away from the original purpose of the policy by stating that in order for the older persons housing to be exempt from providing affordable housing they will have to meet a set of criteria. It is evident that not all housing for older persons would meet these requirements, and that this requirement could lead to homes for older people not being delivered. It is clear from the NPPF and the PPG that older people have a wide and diverse in terms of the types of homes that they may need and that this policy may seek to restrict the provision that is available. The HBF does not consider that this proposed amendment is in line with PPG or NPPF. The HBF are also concerned in relation to the limited consultation that has taken place in terms of such a significant change to the policy. The HBF considers that this amendment to the policy may have significant viability implications and are not aware that these have been assessed, this is not considered to be sound.
9. The HBF does consider that the third option benefits from being numbered which makes the policy easier to use and to read and should be retained.
10. Based on the discussion undertaken at the examination, the HBF considers that the Council should amend the policy as set out below:

Policy H2

Specialist Housing for Older People

1. *In order to meet the needs of an ageing population in Fylde, at least 20% of homes within residential developments of 20 or more homes should be designed specifically to meet the needs of older people or other groups requiring specialist accommodation, including compliance with optional technical standard M4(3(2a)) (wheelchair-adaptable dwellings), unless it is demonstrated that this would render the development unviable. Affordable housing requirements set out in Policy H4*

may be met partly by the provision of homes designed to accommodate older people, where these also fall into the definition of affordable housing set out in the Framework.

2. Specialist housing for older people, will be approved where:
 - It is situated to provide easy access to regular public transport. Within larger development sites, the part of the site in closest proximity to bus stops with a regular service should be chosen for this type of accommodation;
 - The proposal is well-designed, avoiding unnecessary use of high fencing around the perimeter, orientated towards the street with an entrance on the street side of the building providing the shortest possible pedestrian access, including usable outside landscaped gardens with seating, and access and parking for vehicles well separated from pedestrian routes;
 - The development complies with the development strategy and other policies of the plan; and
 - Convenient access arrangements are provided for vehicles providing hospital transport.
3. Specialist housing to meet the needs of older people will not be required to include provision for affordable housing.
4. ~~Proposals for specialist housing for older people will be encouraged where they seek to meet the criteria below:~~
 - ~~All communal areas used by residents will comply with optional technical standard M4(3(2a)) (wheelchair-adaptable dwellings);~~
 - ~~A communal lounge or similar social facility for the exclusive use of all residents is included within the development;~~
 - ~~A shared laundry service is provided for the use of all residents;~~
 - ~~The development will be marketed with a restriction on age for residents of over 55;~~
 - ~~A daily hot meals service is provided either through a central facility on-site or through an outside provider to residents who require it; and~~
 - ~~An emergency alarm call service is provided for all residents.~~

9.46 *In order that new developments provide for the housing needs of Fylde, the Council will generally support applications which provide specialist housing to meet the needs older people.*

11. The HBF considers that the criteria that start with 'all areas use by residents . . .' should be deleted as it adds little to the policy. However, if it is to be retained, the HBF considers that the text that is struck through above would be more appropriate.

12. The HBF is concerned that the proposed amendments to this policy within options 2 and 3 do not provide clarity to the policy, instead the proposed amendments change the purpose of the policy. The HBF is particularly concerned that as proposed the policy may have significant viability issues that have not be assessed as part of the preparation of this review, this is clearly not sound and not in line with the NPPF.

Future Engagement

13. I trust that the Council will find these comments useful as it continues to progress its Local Plan. I would be happy to discuss these issues in greater detail or assist in facilitating discussions with the wider house building industry.

14. The HBF would like to be kept informed of all forthcoming consultations upon the Local Plan and associated documents. Please use the contact details provided below for future correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Joanne Harding', written in black ink.

Joanne Harding
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