

ANGELS & HYDE NURSERIES SCHEME – YAPTON ROAD, BARNHAM COMMENTS FROM HOUSING STRATEGY AND ENABLING MANAGER (ANDY ELDER) - 4 FEBRUARY 2010

Key priority

My priority and interest in the Angels and Hyde Nurseries scheme is the delivery of sufficient family housing, particular affordable family housing, in a context of a well-designed mixed community.

It is important to appreciate that the provision of Affordable Housing (AH) is just one aspect of planning for a genuinely sustainable community. Therefore AH considerations need to be built into the overall pre-application process.

Sustainable communities

The applicants have set a 'target' to deliver up to 40 affordable homes and have proposed that the tenure split for the homes is on an 80:20 basis of rent / shared equity in accordance with the West Sussex Coastal Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) recommendations.

The larger development sites such as the Angels and Hyde Nurseries site provide the Council with the best opportunity to deliver larger homes. The West Sussex Coastal SHMA suggests a target of 30% of homes should be 4 bed+.

The applicants have proposed 3 design options. Option A provides for a mix of houses and flats and is the least favoured option in terms of the affordable housing needs of the Council. Options B & C are the preferred options in terms of design and sustainability.

Economic viability

The forthcoming Adams Integra report on the economic viability of affordable housing options will provide the Council with clear benchmarks for assessing affordability, of and demand for, each of the tenures or AH products to be provided, particularly those that address the intermediate housing market. This will take account of the local housing market and influences on the cost of provision.

The West Sussex Coastal SHMA provides Arun with the robust and up-to-date evidence base that the need and demand exists for each type of housing included in the Angels and Hyde Nurseries application. The application appears to be consistent with the main recommendations set out in the SHMA.

Sustainability considerations

The applicants have set out their general commitment to low carbon and renewable energy aims and objectives for the scheme. The eight sustainability principles, set out in the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH), will need to be addressed in further detail in a future Sustainability Statement.

I would strongly support the applicants considering the use of a Combined Heat and Power (CHP) system for the development. Such a system could provide the heat and power requirements not just for the Angels and Hyde Nurseries development but also for the wider community. This form of decentralised energy technology, if installed on-site, can supply residents with heat and power directly at the point of use, therefore helping avoid significant losses and combating fuel poverty.

The Homes and Community Agency (HCA) have recently established the Low Carbon Infrastructure Initiative (LCI) which is providing £21M for investment in low carbon heating systems. The applicants could investigate this new source of capital funding to support their environmental ambitions for the scheme.

Specially adapted homes

A specific and on-going challenge for Arun DC is to identify and deliver the sufficient number of homes for households with disabilities. There is a considerable unmet demand for such homes and this application provides an ideal opportunity to plan for a suitable number and quality of adapted properties which can be designed with specific households in mind.

Early identification of both properties and people will be required to make this a successful process and this will require the involvement and co-ordination of a number different public, private and voluntary agencies.

The affordable homes should adhere to the design principles of Lifetime Homes.

Homes for particular groups

As recommended in the West Sussex Coastal SHMA with changes in the demographic profile of the Arun district it will be important to look at opportunities to provide suitable housing to support an increasing older population in their own homes.

Community engagement

The applicants have not given consideration to the wider policy aspects of delivering a sustainable community. For an application of this size there are two overarching policy considerations; firstly to promote sustainable communities and increase the supply of quality affordable housing; and secondly, to promote community and neighbourhood engagement.