



## COUNCIL CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD, SOCIAL COHESION AND HOUSING STRATEGY 9 MARCH 2007

Report of the Community Commission

### **Derby Homes New Build – Interim Report on the Approach to ‘Pepper Potting’**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Cabinet Member endorses the following views of the Community Commission:

- 1.1 a) That In existing areas of social housing where clearance is proposed to make way for new build there should be no net loss in the number of affordable units. Therefore the number of units demolished should be the minimum number to be replaced.  
  
b) Further, the wisdom of increasing housing density should be very seriously examined in full partnership with residents. This is because the loss of private open space to more housing is likely to result in the creation of additional social problems. In existing areas of social housing in the City, part of the present total of private open space within the footprint might, with rebuilding, be better used for residents by being used for public - or communally controlled - open space.
- 1.2 The design and siting of affordable units needs to be appropriate both for local needs and globally across the City as a whole.
- 1.3 The Derby Homes new build units should not look out of place or be instantly identifiable as social housing and the Commission would wish to see this addressed in a future report about the scheme.
- 1.4 It is essential that the funding and legal avenues used ensure that the homes built remain available and affordable which for rented properties means preventing an occupant from acquiring the right to buy or right to acquire.

#### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Recommendation 1.1 a) arises because of the Local Plan ratio between market and affordable housing. The maximum proportion of affordable units that will be delivered is 30%. Therefore if 200 homes were cleared with the intention of denser replacement housing being built, a development of 300 units in total would only deliver 90 affordable units. The outcome would be 110 fewer units of affordable housing than at present.



- 2.2 Recommendation 1.1 b) arises some Derby Homes residents find their gardens too large for their needs and older estates with large gardens mean lower density than developments in more recent decades. Given land values and the shortage of affordable housing there is the obvious attraction of rebuilding being denser. However, it is important not to go too far the other way. A recent topic review on housing allocation found that many young families in upstairs flats craved having some safe grassed area of their own where the children could play. A garden for each dwelling would be a good starting point. A sensible balance could be to also have public or communal green areas and there are many examples in Derby of good urban design where social housing is laid out as a square around a green. This would give a larger area for children to burn up energy - ball games would be allowed! – but still reassuringly close enough for parents to keep a watchful eye.
- 2.3 Recommendation 1.2 recognises that the housing need survey which informed the judgment as to the amount of affordable housing needed was based on the City as a whole. Within the large public housing estates there may be a need for different sized properties eg two or four bedrooms in areas of predominately three bedrooms. To achieve a greater mix of tenures it may be better to use the some plots for market houses and build the social housing in predominately ‘owner-occupied’ estates. In other areas there may be very little affordable housing at all and a variety of property sizes would be needed.
- 2.4 Regarding recommendation 1.3, only small numbers of units can be provided under this funding scheme and likely to be located on spare plots among areas of existing housing. Irrespective of the tenure of the adjacent properties, the new units should blend in. The Commission is aware of a batch of small affordable units incongruously placed next to large detached houses.
- 2.5 Recommendation 1.4 recognises this is an issue about sustainability. There is no long term net increase to the supply of affordable housing if it can be bought – with or without discount – by a current occupant.

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<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Implications



<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial**

- 1 None directly arise.

**Legal**

- 1 None directly arise.

**Personnel**

- 1 None directly arise.

**Equalities impact**

- 2 The continued rise in property prices, at a much faster rate than earnings, has the effect of preventing greater numbers of residents from getting a foot on the property ladder. The supply of affordable housing for lower income groups denied access to market housing is a key issue. Mixed siting of affordable housing across developments has the potential to create cohesive sustainable communities. That is more likely to be realised if the market and affordable units are built to the same design using the same materials.

**Corporate Priorities**

- 3 This report relates to **building healthy and independent communities** and **improving the quality of life in Derby's neighbourhoods**