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Planning Policy
Melton Mowbray Borough Council
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Date: 23 August 2017

Our Ref: M15/0715-135

By email only:
planningpolicy@melton.gov.uk

Dear Sirs

**RE: MELTON MOWBRAY LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION: FOCUSED CHANGES
ADDENDUM 2017**

We represent **Rentplus**, a company providing an innovative affordable housing model that delivers affordably rented homes to buy (a 'rent to buy' model) for people who aspire to own their own home, but are currently unable to save for a mortgage deposit.

Introduction

Enclosed with this consultation response is an Affordable Housing Statement by Tetlow King Planning setting out the model's compliance with the NPPF definition of affordable housing and how this should be incorporated into local plans to boost supply and meet local needs. We ask that this be read alongside our representation so that the Council's approach to negotiating housing takes into account this innovative model which has the capacity to improve delivery and meet high levels of local housing need and aspirations of home ownership.

Rentplus is delivering rent to buy housing that meets local peoples' needs and aspirations across England, in partnership with local planning authorities and Registered Providers, allocating housing through the local choice based lettings scheme and targeted lettings plans. Those developments provide homes at an affordable rent for those expecting to purchase in 5, 10, 15 or 20 years, with a 10% gifted deposit to assist purchase.

Flexible policies and pragmatic responses to individual applications elsewhere in England have helped people move out of inappropriate housing; 30% of those moving into a recent Rentplus scheme left existing social and affordable rented properties, releasing those homes for families in greater need. People have also been able to leave the private rented sector and parent's homes, gaining independence and security of tenure in an affordable rented home. With such difficulties delivering affordable housing in the Borough it is clear that assistance is needed to boost supply to meet local needs.

Focused Change 6: Affordable Housing

The Local Plan should not repeat national policy; the text set out at paragraphs 5.8.1 to 5.8.4 should be removed as unless these set out a local definition of affordable housing and the types and mix that are required to meet local needs, these are unnecessary. As the Government has indicated through a number of national consultations since late 2015, it is likely that national planning policy is set to change to introduce new definitions of affordable housing that reflect a wider range of models to assist people into housing that meets their needs.

One such change is to widen the definition of intermediate housing to include rent to buy; our response to the White Paper was to clarify that rent to buy is not an intermediate model, but should be defined separately to take into account its unique characteristics. The Rentplus model enables local households to rent a new house at an affordable rent for a defined period of 5, 10, 15 or 20 years, during which the property is managed by a local Registered Provider partner. The affordable rent

period enables those families, who typically would have no or insufficient savings and therefore no access to a mortgage for a shared ownership or open market property, to save for purchase.

This is important to raise in relation to Focused Change 6 because it is important for the Plan to remain responsive to national policy over its lifetime; to ensure this, changes to the main text should remove the specific NPPF Annex 2 glossary definition of affordable housing, and setting out a more flexible approach to tenure that seeks to maximise delivery and seek to deliver homes that meet needs over lifetimes, and not only the short term. We recommend the below minor change to Policy C4 to reflect this:

Melton Borough Council will seek to manage the delivery of around 1300 new affordable homes between 2011 and 2036 in order to balance the housing stock and meet the community's housing needs and aspirations for home ownership.

It will do this by applying a minimum target for affordable homes within housing developments on all sites of 11 or more units and/or where the floor space exceeds 1000 m², having regard to market conditions, housing needs, housing mix (in regard to tenure, type and size), demonstrable economic viability and other infrastructure requirements based on the following percentages for different value areas:

This would make the policy more effective and consistent with national policy over the lifetime of the Plan. The planned SPD should not be used to introduce policy, so amending the policy at this stage of the review of the Plan will ensure sufficient flexibility that will encourage appropriate delivery.

We would like to be consulted on further stages of the plan and other relevant publications by the Borough Council, by email only to consultation@tetlow-king.co.uk. Please ensure that Rentplus is retained on the consultation database, with Tetlow King Planning listed as their agents.

Yours faithfully

MEGHAN ROSSITER BSc (Hons.) MSc MRTPI
PRINCIPAL PLANNER
For and On Behalf Of
TETLOW KING PLANNING

Cc: Sue Coulson and Anthony Eke, Rentplus

Enc.: Affordable Housing Statement