

Affordable Housing Statement

Vacant Mecca Bingo Club
52 - 60 Dean Road
South Shields
NE33 4DZ

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Affordable Housing Statement has been prepared in support of the planning application for the regeneration of the former Mecca Bingo Club, 52 – 60, Dean Road, South Shields, to provide ground floor Commercial space and upper floors residential development comprising of a range of 2 and 3 bedroom properties for low cost private sale.
- 1.2 Low cost family homes in areas of social decline, and in particular brownfield sites in less affluent areas such as this are in great demand. It is the applicants desire to provide local people with quality housing which they can afford.
- 1.3 This Affordable Housing Statement is a requirement of the South Tyneside Council Planning Application validation checklist, and looks to address national, regional and local planning policy requirements in respect of affordable provision. Section 2 of this Statement sets the planning policy context relevant to the consideration of this submission. Section 3 discusses the need and requirement for affordable housing in the area, with Section 4 assessing the proposed development against these requirements. Section 5 then provides the summary and conclusions.

National Planning Policy

2.1 The national planning policy relating to the provision of affordable housing is set out in Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3 published November 2006, updated June 2010), which sets the following planning policy housing objectives in paragraph 10:

- *"High quality housing that is well designed and built to a high standard;*
- *A mix of housing, both market and affordable, particularly in terms of tenure and price, to support a wide variety of households in all areas, both urban and rural;*
- *A sufficient quantity of housing taking into account need and demand and seeking to improve choice;*
- *Housing developments in suitable locations, which offer a good range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure;*
- *A flexible, responsive supply of land - managed in a way that makes efficient and effective use of land, including re-use of previously developed land, where appropriate".*

2.2 PPS3 also advocates an evidence based policy approach, stating that:

- *"Local Development documents and Regional Spatial Strategy policies should be informed by a robust, shared evidence base, in particular, of housing need and demand, through a Strategic Housing Market Assessment and land availability, through a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment".*

2.3 With specific regard to affordable housing, PPS3 defines this as including social rented and intermediate housing, such as shared equity homes, low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent.

2.4 PPS3 advocates the setting of local target for affordable housing to reflect demonstrated need, but also recognises that such targets should take account of the economic viability of developments and that any

requirements should be based on an up-to-date evidence base. However, PPS3 does set a national indicative minimum threshold of 15 dwellings for seeking the inclusion of affordable housing.

2.5 With regard to the more general approach to the determination of planning applications it is also necessary to have regard to PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, which states in paragraph 8 that:

- *"Where the development plan contains relevant policies, applications for planning permission should be determined in line with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

Regional Planning Policy

2.6 Regional Planning Policy is contained within the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) which was adopted in July 2008. The weight to be attached to RSS is subject to continuing debate, but at this time it remains part of the Development Plan for the determination of this application. Policy 30 of the RSS relates to improving inclusivity and affordability and reiterates the need for Strategic Housing Market Assessments to be undertaken in order to inform local affordable housing needs. The policy goes on to advise that regard should be had to this level of need when determining all planning applications for housing.

South Tyneside Local Development Framework

2.7 With regard to local policy, the extant South Tyneside Local Development Framework (LDF) was finalised in 2012, and SPD4 relates to Affordable Housing and SC4 of SPD4 states that the Council will seek to secure at least 25% of dwellings as affordable units on any development of 15 units or more or 0.5 hectares or more (whichever gives the greater number of dwellings). This has replaced the 25 units / hectare threshold previously set

out in Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policy H7. This new threshold is in-line with PPS3.

- 2.8 The LDF sets out development principles and priorities over the next 15 years or so. The Council has already adopted two key documents in July 2007- the Core Strategy DPD and Development Policies DPD. The Council is also well advanced in the preparation of the Communities and Economy DPD which will include allocations and policies for housing.
- 2.9 In line with PPS 3 (Paragraph 29), the expectation is that affordable housing will be provided on site so that it contributes towards creating a mix of housing types and tenure, to meet the needs and aspirations of existing and future communities.

South Tyneside Housing Strategy

2.10 The South Tyneside Housing Strategy identifies four strategic priorities for housing in the Borough. These are:

1. To address housing market failure and to create sustainable, inclusive and cohesive communities where people choose to live;
2. To improve and maintain the conditions and management of existing housing and neighbourhoods and provide housing that is healthy, energy efficient and safe;
3. To facilitate the development of new housing to meet the specialised need of specific sections of the community; and
4. To facilitate the development of new housing in sufficient numbers to meet the present and future needs of the borough, and to take into account of aspirations for better housing and a balanced housing stock.

3.0 With regard to providing the evidence to demonstrate a need for affordable housing in South Tyneside, the Council have undertaken a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which was subsequently completed in February 2013. The SHLAA considers housing need across South Tyneside in terms of the several delivery areas proposed in the Issues and Options Core Strategy.

3.1 In terms of the affordable housing need for South Tyneside as a whole, the SHLAA identifies:

- a 5-year supply of deliverable sites to yield about 2,325 dwellings;
- a 10-year supply of deliverable/developable sites to yield about 4,785 dwellings; and
- a 15-year supply of deliverable/developable sites and broad areas to yield about 6,885 dwellings.

With regard to the delivery of affordable housing, SPD4 advises that South Tyneside Council seek at least 25% affordable housing.

3.2 Within the South Tyneside Vision 2011 – 31, Change Is Happening Delivery Plan 2013 – 16 it states:

- *“We want South Tyneside to be clean, green and safe, with a Housing Market and local services that offer affordability, quality and choice”.*
- *“We will build new affordable homes for sale and rent that will add value to our economic growth and regeneration ambitions and provide a return on investment. Our ambition is to meet the demand for up to 12,000 new homes over the next 20 years.”*
- *“We also have plans to invest £180m in new and improved homes, building on the success of 71 new affordable homes ...”*

- 3.3 This planning Application seeks permission for the regeneration of the Former Mecca Bingo Club to provide 56 dwelling houses for low cost private sale. In considering the implications of Affordable Housing delivery, there are a number of key factors for the site, including the nature of housing proposed, the purpose of the development itself, and the financial viability of the scheme as a whole.
- 3.4 Looking at the type of housing proposed, the development seeks permission for a mixture of 2 and 3 bedroom apartments. This site was previously occupied by a Mecca Bingo club, with the site stood vacant since the closure in September 2014.
- 3.5 There are substantial costs associated with the site and its preparation prior to the construction of dwellings. Therefore, by maximizing the number of dwellings within the building will ensure the development is viable. It is clear that the regeneration of this building for Private sale and rented units would help sustain a more balanced tenure in the locality.
- 3.6 In recent years, the volatile housing market, fluctuating interest rates and the banks reluctance to lend money has led to many to believe that home ownership is beyond their means. Their aspirations have been further dampened by the need to save for a deposit in addition to surveyor and legal fees. Therefore, low cost housing and affordable housing in the area is in great demand and by regenerating buildings such as this vacant mecca bingo club provides the ideal availability of true affordable housing.

SECTION 4: CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The development proposed in this planning application will secure the regeneration of a vacant building in the centre of an existing commercial and residential area. The building has been vacant since the former Mecca Bingo Club was cleared in September 2014.

- 4.2 The development will provide a range of low cost family houses of different sizes, types and design, and in light of the indicative pricing, it is expected that the development will be within reach of most of the local community even with less than average earnings.

- 4.3 It is considered that this proposal fully accords with National, Regional and Local Planning Policy and the approach above is wholly in accordance with the LDF and SPD4.