

BETTER HOMES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

Good practice guide to building neighbourhoods



April 2018



Exeter
City Council

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FOREWORD

Exeter's social housing, built up over many years, forms the foundation of our mixed city. By offering affordable and secure homes for people on lower incomes, it means residents of different means and backgrounds can live alongside each other across Devon's capital.

In recent decades, jobs and the population have grown substantially in the city, but new and affordable housing has failed to keep pace. Like many residents I know we must not only protect but increase our social housing, and building neighbourhoods is a key part of this discussion.

When done well, building neighbourhoods can offer existing tenants and leaseholders better homes, more new and affordable housing, and improvements to the local environment. But when done badly, we know building neighbourhoods can result in disagreement, which can leave residents feeling they have not been properly consulted, social housing being lost, and displaced tenants and leaseholders getting a bad deal.

Although my powers to get involved in neighbourhood building projects are limited, I will do all I can to make sure residents are at the heart of any proposals on their estate. I want to support residents and good landlords in developing plans that command widespread support and trust, and that deliver better homes for local people.

Councillor Peter Edwards

Leader and Portfolio Holder for City Development



1 INTRODUCTION

Exeter's social housing, built up over many years, forms the foundation of our mixed city. In recent decades, jobs and the population have grown substantially in the city, but new and affordable housing has failed to keep pace. As a result, genuinely affordable homes are now more crucial than ever to making sure Devon's capital is a city for all.

Exeter City Council is committed to building more genuinely affordable homes for Exeter residents, and to protecting those affordable homes that we already have. These issues are central to discussions over plans for estate regeneration and building neighbourhoods, which the Council believes must be developed with residents and deliver better homes and neighbourhoods for local people.

Putting Residents at the Heart of Plans

Estate regeneration or 'Building Neighbourhoods' is the process of physical renewal of social housing estates through a range of interventions – from refurbishment and intensification, to demolition and rebuilding. Many of Exeter's housing estates will be undergoing this process, meaning it will affect many of the city's residents.

When undertaken successfully, building neighbourhoods can bring genuine benefits to residents, with better homes for local people living on the estate, more homes of all tenures, improvements to neighbourhoods including infrastructure, new opportunities for training and employment, and new community facilities.

But alongside these potential benefits, building neighbourhoods often involves disruption and change to established communities, sometimes over several years, and can result in disagreement between residents and their landlords. Any plan for major changes to a social housing estate needs to be treated carefully and sensitively and carried out with the close involvement of residents.

The Council believes that for building neighbourhoods to be a success there must be resident support for proposals, based on full and transparent consultation from the very start of the process, and meaningful ongoing involvement of those affected.

Better Homes for Local People

Where proposals include the demolition and replacement of existing homes, the Council believes those social tenants affected should be guaranteed full rights to return (or to remain through a single move), and leaseholders and freeholders must be offered a fair deal.

More widely, other options should be looked at alongside demolition, and if demolition is chosen as a way to proceed, then affordable homes should at least be replaced on a like for like basis and increased wherever possible.

The Council's Approach

This guide sets out the detail behind the Council's principles of successful neighbourhood building schemes (Parts 2-4), and the mechanisms they have to encourage them to be followed as widely as possible in Exeter (Part 5).

More broadly, the Council believes that social housing residents must be at the heart of decisions about the ongoing management and future of their estates. Comprehensive policies and proposals for the future of social housing are contained in the Council's Housing Strategy. Equally, policies and

proposals relating to other aspects of development proposals – including environmental requirements and design – are contained in the Local Plan.



2 VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR BUILDING NEIGHBOURHOODS

2.1 The Council's Vision for Building Neighbourhoods in Exeter

The core of the Council's vision for building neighbourhoods in Exeter is to deliver better homes and communities for local people. Exeter has always ranked very highly in terms of its liveability, of any city in the UK. It is the quality of place and quality of life that make it so. Its popularity and its attractiveness as a place, drive growth and investment, fuelling the demand for more housing, placing greater pressures on an overloaded infrastructure including hospitals and schools and other services.

Much of the new housing and the new jobs have migrated to the edge of the City and there remains great reliance on the private car to get about. It is clear that congestion on the City's roads is directly impacting upon public health and quality of life of its citizens, while at the same undermining Exeter's economic success story. The Council's vision is to keep the focus on liveability which means planning for growth, but the right kind of growth firmly focused around people and place, 'Building Neighbourhoods'.

How can the Council's vision translate into clear actions? The Council have set out three, clear high-level propositions to help decision-makers prioritise investment, planning decisions and to shape the city's development priorities.

1. Strengthening the 'Global City' Drivers

There are a number of universally-acknowledged and timeless qualities that are unique to Exeter and that make it the special place it is. These qualities are recognised as the historic city centre, the Cathedral, the compact scale of the City and the closeness of green hills and the countryside that enclose it, the River Exe and its valley connecting the centre to the countryside and to the sea.

They strengthen the brand and the identity of the City and reflect the kind of aspirational working and living environments that successful global businesses are seeking. Future growth and development planned in the City must strengthen and protect these qualities and each must make its own contribution to the future natural and built heritage of the City. This means investing in quality and good design. The City Centre is such an important asset. Rather than directing new investment out to the edge of the City, the Council's vision is for development and investment to be redirected into those parts of the City Centre and those areas immediately around the City Centre that are of poor quality and/or are underdeveloped or underused.



2. Investing in Communities: Diversifying Communities to Improve Services, Housing and Access to Jobs

The way in which Cities in the UK, like Exeter, grew and expanded in the latter part of the 20th Century and early part of this century has led to a kind of monotypic land use pattern where all the employment tends to congregate in one or two parts of the city. Think of Marsh Barton and Sowton, for example.

Residential areas and suburbs across the City are similarly monotypic too, where the house types and the socio-economic profile of the residents are largely the same. The Council's vision is for neighbourhood building developments to increase diversification, introducing for example, workplaces where none exist, increasing population around rail stations and along public transport corridors.

It also means developing choice, improving affordability and providing better accessibility to housing of all types and tenure. It means greater intensification of housing in some areas and better access to local healthcare, training and education facilities. Neighbourhood building projects should also include social spaces and places where communities can get together and the communities themselves need to have a greater say in shaping their future.



3. Connecting it up: Building a Sociable Movement and Public Realm Network

Exeter is already a very green city, with a network of Valley Parks, the River Exe corridor slicing through the heart of the City and prominent green ridgelines forming the setting. The connections between them and their strategic role within the city is less well-defined. The Council's vision is for much more to be made of this network to increase and improve connectivity, but also make more of these as popular destinations in their own right.

The Council would like to see a series of orbital green routes that encourage more walking and cycling between communities and linking important destinations such as the University, schools, big employment areas like Marsh Barton, Sowton and Pynes Hill. Innovations such as a new orbital bus route which would also relieve pressure on some of the arterial routes and introduce different movement patterns across the city, changing the daily commute for many people.

The main arterial routes leading into and out from the City Centre could be made a lot more attractive and safer for the pedestrian and the cyclist. Roads currently dominated by traffic could turn into

streets with wider pavements and more street trees. This means reducing traffic and switching more people from the car to public transport and walking and cycling.



Key beliefs of the Council's vision include the principles that neighbourhood building schemes should see no loss of affordable housing (particularly homes at social rent levels), build trust between residents and landlords, and result in an improved local environment with high quality design. In addition, the Council wishes to see the provision of more affordable housing, homes that better suit to residents' needs, and schemes that provide good community facilities.

2.2 Objectives of Building Neighbourhoods

The overarching objectives for any neighbourhood building scheme will usually be to:

- deliver safe and better-quality homes for local people;
- increase the overall supply of new and affordable homes; and
- improve the quality of the local environment through a better public realm and provision of social infrastructure (e.g. parks, community centres etc.).

Once the objectives of a neighbourhood building scheme have been formulated in consultation with residents, the physical interventions required to achieve them can be considered. The approach taken will differ from project to project, depending on factors that include: the existing characteristics and quality of an estate; the financial resources available; any regeneration or redevelopment plans that affect the wider area; and the wishes of residents and other stakeholders.

The range of physical interventions available to support the delivery of neighbourhood building projects include: repairs to, and refurbishment of, existing homes; building new homes on 'infill' sites; and demolition and rebuilding. Different schemes will require different interventions, or a combination of some or all of the above: there is no 'one size fits all' approach.

However, when considering the option of demolishing and rebuilding homes, developers, housing associations and their partners should always consider alternative options to demolition first. They should balance the potential benefits of demolishing and rebuilding homes against the wider social and environmental impacts of this option.

This guide seeks to set out principles that would support a positive relationship between residents and the Council, the developer or housing association during a process of neighbourhood building. Residents should be at the heart of any such process, which means developers and housing associations should engage early and meaningfully with residents to jointly develop priorities.



3 FULL AND TRANSPARENT CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT

When developing neighbourhood building proposals, developers and housing associations should always engage openly and meaningfully with those affected by the project from the outset. Residents should be given sufficient opportunity to be involved in shaping any proposals that will affect their homes, and they should be proactively supported to do so throughout the planning and design process.

3.1 Early Consultation and Involvement

Early engagement is essential, and residents should be given opportunities to be involved from the outset in developing the vision, options appraisals, design, procurement, and delivery of schemes.

Where social or private tenancies are created, or leasehold or freehold sales are made, on an estate where proposals for regeneration are being considered, prospective residents should be made aware of any plans before signing their tenancy or completing their purchase.



3.2 Consultation and Engagement Methods

Government has issued good practice guidance on consultation and this is augmented by a body of case law, such as the Gunning principles, which councils, developers and housing associations must follow when consulting and engaging with residents.

Consultation should be:

- **Transparent** – all the issues and options should be set out in clear, accessible and non-technical language, with information that has influenced any decisions being shared as early as possible;
- **Extensive** – every reasonable effort should be made to engage with as broad a range of groups as possible, including primarily the residents of an estate, and also those living and working on or near it;
- **Responsive** – consultation should result in clear actions that arise directly from the views expressed by respondents; and
- **Meaningful** – views expressed during the process should be considered, and, where landlords do not agree with responses, they should give explanations for the alternative course of action that they have taken.

There are a range of options for consulting and engaging with those affected by neighbourhood building. Any successful neighbourhood building scheme is likely to involve a mixture of different ways to involve people, such as:

- **Direct proactive engagement of a wide group of residents** – through surveys, votes, and ‘door-to-door’ conversations.
- **Involvement of residents in developing the detail of proposals** – through specialist resident committees, forums, and workshops; steering groups with resident representation; and meetings of Tenant and Resident Associations and neighbourhood forums.
- **Broader opportunities for residents to be kept updated and engage** – through ‘drop-in’ days and public meetings; letter, email, and newsletter updates; and web-based consultation tools, such as Commonplace, or Online forums, such as Facebook pages for the estate.

As projects develop and change, and as alternative options are considered with residents, different approaches to consultation and engagement may become appropriate. Developers, housing associations and their partners should always be open to suggestions from residents and other stakeholders about developing more effective consultation and engagement mechanisms. Developers should support residents who wish to set up neighbourhood forums and develop plans for neighbourhood building.

3.3 Engaging with Residents

Residents should be the primary consultees during a neighbourhood building project. As well as social tenants, resident leaseholders and freeholders, developers and housing associations should also seek to consult with private tenants or those living in temporary accommodation on the estate, as well as non-resident leaseholders and freeholders.

Consultation approaches should be tailored to residents’ needs. For example, bespoke consultation arrangements may be required for elderly residents, those whose first language is not English, or those who have disabilities. Specific consideration should be paid to how best to engage residents about improving the safety of their homes, where this is an objective of regeneration.

Developers and housing associations should engage with Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs), or similar resident representative bodies, where they exist, in addition to direct contact with residents.

3.4 Supporting Residents to be Involved

Residents should be empowered to engage in consultation exercises by ensuring they are meaningfully involved in as much as possible of the discussion and decisions about issues like the design, scale, and tenure of new homes. Often residents may need support to be able to engage more effectively in decisions about neighbourhood building.

Developers, housing associations and their partners should provide independent capacity-building and advocacy support for residents if they request it. This could include advising tenants on their rights, supporting residents in negotiating with their landlord, or helping residents ‘skill up’ and be involved in the process of selecting a development partner.

Residents should be given an opportunity to select their own independent tenant and leaseholder advisors (ITLAs), paid for by landlords, and to de-select them if they are unhappy with the advice or support that they are receiving. ITLAs should not seek to impose pre-determined outcomes on a regeneration process.

In this way, they can help to build trust and ultimately support a better project through closer engagement and shared understanding between a developer or housing association and residents.

3.5 Engaging with Other Stakeholders

Many estates include businesses providing local services and employment. Owners and operators of these businesses should be engaged in the neighbourhood building process, and any proposals should give weight to the importance of minimising disruption to those businesses and retaining local employment opportunities.

Many estates also include other facilities such as places of worship, schools, or community halls. Owners, operators, and users of these facilities should also be consulted and engaged with.

Beyond those stakeholders operating directly on an estate, it is also important to positively engage with: elected local councillors and Members of Parliament; residents, businesses and other stakeholders who may not be located within the boundaries of an estate but who will be affected by the process of neighbourhood building and regeneration; and other stakeholders such as utility providers, highway authorities, or Network Rail.

3.6 Resident Charters

Resident Charters set out Councils' or housing associations' commitments to residents at an early stage of the discussions over neighbourhood building proposals. They can be an effective way to engage residents. Commitments set out in a Charter should be clear, specific and deliverable, and written in accessible and non-technical language.

Resident Charters can be adopted for an individual neighbourhood building project, or as a broader statement to cover multiple projects or a programme.

3.7 Open and Transparent Options Appraisals

Residents should be closely involved in shaping the priorities for building neighbourhoods and options for achieving these priorities. To achieve this, options appraisals should be open and transparent. They should:

- a) Include the rationale, aims and objectives of the project in the context of: delivering better homes for local people; the landlord's strategic priorities; and neighbourhood, local, and Exeter-wide planning and housing policies.
- b) Set out the factors that have informed the development of the proposed options, and how these have been prioritised and balanced. These factors might include: the existing characteristics and quality of an estate; the safety of existing buildings; the financial resources available; any regeneration or redevelopment plans that affect the wider area; and the wishes of residents and other stakeholders.
- c) Include technical and financial appraisals that have influenced any decisions on options. These should be available in an accessible format with non-technical summaries.
- d) Assess the full range of social, economic, and environmental costs and benefits of different options. This assessment might include:
 - any expected costs and savings resulting from changes in rents, service charges, energy bills and any other impacts on household expenditure;
 - the cost to residents' health of poor quality housing;
 - the financial cost to the landlord of maintaining existing homes to a reasonable standard (given the number of years for which doing so would be effective);

- the number of other households who might not otherwise have a home, or a home of the right size for their needs, if the regeneration does not go ahead; and
 - the cost of disruption to residents' lives for the duration of the project.
- e) Clearly set out any options that have been discounted as unviable or undeliverable, with a transparent explanation of why they are unviable or undeliverable.
- f) Set out what role residents and other stakeholders have played in developing and shaping options, and how the council or housing association and other agencies have supported them in doing so.

The safety of residents must be the highest priority when appraising options.



4 'BETTER HOMES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE' PRINCIPLES

Where significant neighbourhood building is planned that involves the demolition of existing homes, the Council wants to ensure that any proposals include the delivery of better homes for local people. They therefore believe all neighbourhood building schemes in Exeter that involve the demolition of existing homes should provide:

- an increase in affordable housing;
- full rights to return or remain for social tenants; and
- a fair deal for leaseholders and freeholders.

These principles are set out in greater detail below. They have been developed by drawing on good practice. The Council believes that they should underpin the offer to residents affected by plans for neighbourhood building that include the demolition of existing homes.

I. AN INCREASE IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The shortage of affordable homes is at the root of Exeter's housing crisis. It is vital that neighbourhood building plans are used to increase the amount of affordable housing, particularly homes based on social rent levels, wherever possible. As a minimum, plans that involve the demolition of existing homes must ensure that affordable homes demolished are replaced on a like-for-like basis.

Demolition and Like-for-Like Replacement

Demolishing and rebuilding homes is a time-consuming and expensive process and can be highly disruptive for residents and established communities. Before pursuing demolition as an option, developers and housing associations should consider whether there are alternatives to achieve the vision and objectives of neighbourhood building that are more cost effective and have a lesser impact on residents and the environment.

Where demolition and rebuilding are pursued as part of a neighbourhood building project, this should only happen where it does not result in a net loss of affordable housing. This must be on a like-for-like basis, so that, for example, homes at social rent levels are replaced with homes based on the same rent levels.

Where an estate is being redeveloped as part of a wider programme then it may be possible to re-provide a different mix of affordable housing on that particular estate (taking account of the wishes of people who want to return to or remain on the estate) if like-for-like replacement is achieved across the overall programme. Where this is proposed, the Council will closely scrutinise planning applications and will only agree to them where they are certain that the housing is being genuinely re-provided and that no better option is available.

Replacement of Homes on the Basis of Floorspace

To ensure that new homes of appropriate sizes are provided, replacement of affordable homes during neighbourhood building should be on the basis of floorspace, rather than number of units. In adopting this approach, developers and housing associations may consider altering the mix of homes.

For example, if an estate has a high proportion of one-bedroom homes that are being demolished, the landlord may choose to replace some of them with the same or greater floorspace arranged as fewer, family-sized homes. This should be discussed with residents as part of the engagement and consultation process, and landlords should have regard to the impact any changes may have on social tenants who want to return to or remain on the estate.

Building More New Homes

In addition to ensuring that neighbourhood building does not lead to a net loss in affordable homes, developers and housing associations should use the opportunity to provide as much additional affordable housing as possible.

Developers and housing associations should look to increase the number of affordable homes as part of a neighbourhood building scheme by building at higher densities wherever possible. Options for doing so should be discussed with residents as part of the consultation process.

Increasing the density of an estate and including open market homes may improve the viability of a scheme and help to maximise the number of genuinely affordable homes, in addition to improving estate integration across the city.

Where neighbourhood building involves building affordable homes in addition to those needed to rehouse any tenants whose homes are demolished, landlords should adopt local lettings policies for new affordable homes for rent to help ensure that local people benefit from the additional homes being built.

Building Genuinely Affordable, Healthy Homes

Exeter City Council is committed to building more genuinely affordable homes for Exeter residents, which extends to running and maintenance costs associated with home ownership. With fuel poverty an ever-increasing issue as energy costs continue to rise, the Council wants to encourage neighbourhood building projects to consider building to the Passivhaus Standard where possible.

Passivhaus is a world leading energy performance standard and design methodology with more than 30,000 buildings including dwellings, schools, offices and sports halls having been built to the Passivhaus standard. Detailed research and scientific monitoring on these projects have proven that using the Passivhaus methodology will reduce the energy demand of a building by up to 90% of that of a standard UK building (if built to current Building Regulation requirements).

This is typically achieved through high levels of insulation, exceptional air tightness, high performance windows and doors and highly efficient mechanical ventilation systems with heat recovery (MVHR). It focuses on internal comfort and high air quality, which when combined with healthy design principles from the outset can provide an uplifting and life enhancing environment.

II. FULL RIGHT TO RETURN OR REMAIN FOR SOCIAL TENANTS

Where neighbourhood building plans involve the demolition of existing homes, developers and housing associations should seek to phase projects wherever possible, with the aim of ensuring that households can remain on the estate by moving no more than once. Where tenants have to move temporarily off the estate, they must have a full right to return.

Right to Return or Remain for Social Tenants

Social tenants who have to move as a result of neighbourhood building plans, either through a single move or a temporary move off the estate, should have a full right to a property on the regenerated estate of a suitable size, at the same or a similar level of rent, and with the same security of tenure.

Households who are currently overcrowded should be offered homes large enough for their needs and should not be offered homes which, if accepted, would result in overcrowding.

Households who under-occupy their current homes should not automatically qualify for a new home with the same number of bedrooms. For example, landlords may choose to limit the number of bedrooms offered to under-occupiers to a maximum of one greater than their need.

Temporary Rehousing

Social tenants who must move into a new home temporarily as a result of neighbourhood building should be awarded high priority in the local allocations policy. Any offer of alternative accommodation should be reasonable, in that it meets the needs of the household in terms of the number of bedrooms and any special requirements (such as wheelchair accessibility or adaptations).

Financial Compensation for Displaced Social Tenants

Landlords should seek to offer the maximum home loss compensation permitted by legislation to tenants who meet the statutory criteria and who are displaced from their homes due to neighbourhood building projects.

Landlords should pay for the 'disturbance costs' of moving home. This means paying the reasonable costs of moving, such as removal costs, telephone and utility connection costs (including installation of appliances), and the provision of new carpets and curtains. Tenants who must move more than once should receive home loss payments for each move.

Assistance for Private Tenants

Councils, developers and landlords (where the council is not all of these) should work together to make sure that private tenants on estates being considered for regeneration are aware of their options and rights, including signposting them towards alternative housing options. The Council may also have duties towards private tenants under homelessness legislation.

Additional support and assistance should be offered to more vulnerable households living on estates, regardless of their tenure. In some cases, this may mean that they want to move out of the area or into specialist accommodation. The Council, developers and housing associations should make reasonable endeavours to meet these requirements.

Short-Term Council and Housing Association Tenancies

It is reasonable to avoid granting new long-term tenancies for homes on an estate once a firm decision to undertake a neighbourhood building project has been made. The use of homes on a temporary basis should be carefully considered for its impact on long-term residents and should be subject to consultation.

This should include the benefits of such an approach, including its positive impact on providing accommodation for homeless households and helping to ensure they are accommodated as close to their social networks and places of work as possible. Where developers or housing associations propose to let homes on short-term tenancies, they should ensure that new tenants are fully informed about any plans to regenerate the estate and are aware of their rights, including how they differ from those on secure tenancies.

Short-term tenants should be reminded of these differences to avoid confusion at a later stage. They should also be given as much advance notice as possible of planned neighbourhood building, so that alternative accommodation can be found if necessary.

III. A FAIR DEAL FOR LEASEHOLDERS AND FREEHOLDERS

Leaseholders and freeholders affected by building neighbourhoods should be treated fairly and fully compensated if their homes are to be demolished.

Acquiring Leasehold and Freehold Homes

Where it is necessary to acquire homes owned by leaseholders and freeholders, landlords should always seek to do so by negotiation in the first instance. This can help avoid a time consuming compulsory purchase process, which creates uncertainty for the household and can lead to significant delays in the project. Market value (plus home loss payments where appropriate) should be offered in good faith in the first instance.

Where compulsory purchase is required, the rights of resident and non-resident leaseholders and freeholders are set out in legislation. The purchase should be based on a value of the home undertaken by an independent valuer, paid for by the landlord if requested by the leaseholder or freeholder. The valuation must reflect the value of the property before the impact of any regeneration or proposed regeneration is taken into account.

Re-housing Options for Resident Leaseholders and Freeholders

Positive consideration should be given to enabling resident leaseholders and freeholders to combine market value and home loss payments towards the purchase price for a new home. Landlords should consider paying for other costs that might be borne by resident leaseholders and freeholders, such as the cost of moving home or setting up new utility connections.

Developers and housing associations are encouraged to consider other ways to support resident leaseholders and freeholders to move to alternative accommodation. This might include support to use their equity to buy a home on the open market in the local area, with the developer or housing association owning the difference between the value of this equity and the market price of the home (either on a shared equity or shared ownership basis). Other approaches could include home swaps, or early buy-back arrangements.

Some resident leaseholders and freeholders may have very little experience of purchasing a home outside the Right to Buy process. The developer or housing association should offer them assistance throughout any process of buying a new home.

Developers and housing associations should offer resident leaseholders and freeholders the right to a new home on the regenerated estate through at least the following options:

- a) a shared equity basis, where the resident leaseholder or freeholder owns a proportion of the new home equivalent to the market value of the property that they gave up, with no rent payable on the remaining 'unsold' share. The resident leaseholder or freeholder should be allowed to retain any uplift in the value of their share of the new property between the point of purchase and any eventual sale; or
- b) a shared ownership basis, where the resident leaseholder or freeholder owns a share of a new affordable home, is able to increase the share owned over time, and may pay rent on the remaining share to the developer or housing association in the meantime.

If non-resident leaseholders or freeholders return to their home on the estate while regeneration plans are under discussion or being implemented, landlords should take into account the length of their residency before offering them re-housing options.



5 APPLYING THE ‘BETTER HOMES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE’ PRINCIPLES

The Council wants the good practice and principles in this guide to be applied on all neighbourhood building schemes across Exeter. The Council also strongly encourages residents and landlords to refer to the good practice in this guide, irrespective of the degree to which the Council is involved.

To help ensure that better homes for local people are provided through significant neighbourhood building schemes that involve the demolition of existing housing, the Council will use their planning powers to make sure that these schemes protect existing affordable homes. They will do this by requiring that there is no net loss of affordable homes and that any homes demolished are replaced on a like-for-like basis. The Council also expects that these schemes should maximise the delivery of additional affordable homes wherever possible.

5.1 Planning Powers

The Council has a statutory planning role in any significant neighbourhood building proposal and will make it clear that neighbourhood building should not lead to the loss of affordable housing and that it should aim to deliver an uplift in affordable housing where possible.

When considering neighbourhood building schemes, the Council will therefore expect existing affordable housing floorspace to be replaced on an equivalent basis – i.e. where social rented floorspace is lost, it should be replaced by general needs rented accommodation with rents at levels based on those of homes that have been lost. They will also expect the delivery of additional affordable housing to be maximised.



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