



SOUTH BELFAST PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Developer Contributions Consultation

Department for Social Development

Housing Affordability Team

Level 1

Lighthouse Building

Gasworks Business Park

Ormeau Road

Belfast

BT7 2JA

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Please find attached the SBPB response to the Developer Contributions for Affordable Housing in Northern Ireland consultation. This response has been prepared by the South Belfast Partnership Board in consultation with a number of local community groups in South Belfast. In particular, support has been verbalised by a representatives from the Inner South and South West Neighbourhood Renewal Area.

The South Belfast Partnership would generally be in support of any policy that helps create more of a mix of tenure. We agree largely with the principal of breaking up or avoiding concentrations of social deprivation and its potential to act as a means of delivering new or replacement affordable housing as part of the development package. There however needs to be a lot more planning and collaboration between the stakeholders involved. We realise that the need for affordable housing is rising and although the dispersal of the deprivation does not really tackle the issue we realise that the creation of more balanced communities is socially more sustainable.

There are feelings of unrest amongst the developers around the lack of clarity about the contributions and potential that this policy may make developments economically unviable. There needs to be clarity at the outset around the expected level of commuted sum on the development plots to ensure that projects are economically viable and once completed result in more balanced

communities. The development industry argue that there is an apparent need for governmental departments to plan and fund infrastructure for new developments to ensure that they go ahead and are delivered for the communities who need them.

There will need to be a lot more research into the practice of Section 106 usage in England to ensure that examples are comparative on scale to Northern Ireland. There is a clear appetite from all stakeholders for more robust guidance and the full use of zoning powers in planning. Through RPA local authorities will hold planning powers, which will be separate from some of the housing functions transferred to DSD. Therefore partnership around this issue between the two authorities will be crucial. There is also a need for effective partnership between stakeholders, housing associations and government departments to ensure that the viability of this policy can truly be analysed and an appropriate proposal agreed among all parties.

If developers decide to opt out of developing in areas where the greatest needs for social housing exists then the whole notion of creating mixed tenure and providing for need in these areas will be doubly disadvantaged as it could potentially stall the progress of new developments and leave areas with vacant spaces and derelict housing, thus putting regeneration further and further out of reach in these already deprived areas. According to figures from the Regional Development Strategy, Northern Ireland is falling short of yearly building of new houses. If supply doesn't meet demand this will drive house prices up and decrease the viability of affordable housing stock.

Mixed tenure development will need to be designed, developed and managed sensitively to ensure that there is no "poor doors" situation. Therefore there should be little or no difference in design of affordable and private housing within a scheme that would allow prejudices to be formed and ultimately lead to developments not being sold or occupied.

The SBPB sees the merit of PPS22, however, are uncertain if it is currently fit for purpose.

Hoping this response is constructive and helps in the formulation of this planning policy.

Kind regards



Briega Arthurs