

13. CONTINUATION OF DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS FOR PUBLIC ART

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration seeking approval of the continuation of the reduced rate for developer contributions towards public art for some types of development.

The report recalled that whilst the council approved Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for Public Art in June 2006, in June 2012 it agreed a temporary reduction following a downturn in economic growth. This reduction was subsequently carried forward for a number of years and at the Council Executive meeting in April 2017 it was agreed that they continued to remain at the reduced rate until December 2017.

The local plan was prepared at a time of strong economic growth but as a consequence of the recession the strength of the national and local economy declined significantly. However whilst the economy remained fragile in some areas there had been a recovery in the housing market. While completion levels had not recovered to pre-recession levels there was evidence to suggest that completions were now in line with the most recent assessments of demand as set out in the Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HoNDA) prepared for the second Strategic Development Plan.

However the assessment had identified that there was now a far greater demand for social housing. Therefore given the high priority by the council to the delivery of affordable housing it was proposed that all social housing development and other affordable housing sites should continue to be exempt from public art contributions for a period of two years to 31 December 2019. For the avoidance of doubt where a development comprised mainstream private housing and affordable housing on the mainstream private housing element would attract public art contributions at the normal SPG rate.

Similarly there was some evidence to suggest that the high street retail sector continued to operate in challenging economic circumstances, not least of all as a result of the growth in online retailing. For this reason it was proposed to continue the relaxation for retail developments for a further two years to 31 December 2019.

The Head of Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration continued to advise that it was normal practice to collect public art contributions from many developments and to use these to deliver a limited number of public art developments in appropriate locations. Therefore there was no guarantee that contributions from housing developments would be used to deliver public art within these developments.

It was recommended that the Council Executive :-

1. Notes that the temporary changes agreed by Council Executive regarding developer contributions for public art came to end on 31

December 2017; and

2. Agrees that the current reduced public art contributions should not be continued beyond 31 December 2017, except for those contributions from social housing and retail development which would be continued for a further two years to 31 December 2019

Decision

To approve the terms of the report