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SENT BY EMAIL  
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Dear Sir / Madam,

### **BRADFORD LOCAL PLAN: PREFERRED OPTIONS (REG 18)**

1. Thank you for consulting with the Home Builders Federation (HBF) on the Draft Bradford District Local Plan – Preferred Options (Regulation 18) consultation.
2. The HBF is the principal representative body of the house-building industry in England and Wales. Our representations reflect the views of our membership, which includes multi-national PLC's, regional developers and small, local builders. In any one year, our members account for over 80% of all new "for sale" market housing built in England and Wales as well as a large proportion of newly built affordable housing.
3. The industry is keen to work with the Council to ensure a sound plan is produced which facilitates the delivery of an appropriate number of homes across Bradford. With this in mind we would welcome further engagement with the industry throughout the production of the plan.

### **Plan period**

4. The Council proposes a Plan period of 2020-2038. The HBF considers it may be beneficial to take a cautious approach as the timetable has already slipped, with adoption now expected in 2023, whilst the 2038 figure would give the 15 years recommended by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>1</sup> it does not allow for any further slippage. The HBF considers that the Council may want to consider extending the plan period further to 2040.

### **Vision and Objectives**

5. The HBF generally supports the part of the vision that sets out that the growth of the City of Bradford and the towns along Airedale and Wharfedale have been supported by a significant increase in the delivery of new homes.
6. The HBF also generally supports the objectives which recognises the role of the City of Bradford and the towns along Airedale and Wharfedale as dynamic locations of choice

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph 22 of the NPPF



for housing and economic growth, and which ensures that the requirements for housing are met in full.

### **Policy SP8: Housing Growth**

7. This policy looks to deliver a housing requirement of 30,672 new homes over the plan period 2020 to 2038, equating to an indicative average of 1,704 dwellings per annum (dpa).
8. The NPPF expects strategic policy-making authorities to follow the standard method in this guidance for assessing local housing need. The HBF has considered the LHN using the Standard Methodology set out in PPG, it can be calculated as follows:

#### Step 1 - Setting the baseline:

2014-based household projections in England average annual household growth over a 10-year period, with the current year being used as the starting point. The household projection for 2021 was 213,692 and in 2031 it is 229,467, therefore the growth equals 15,775, giving an average of 1,577.5 households each year.

#### Step 2 - An adjustment to take account of affordability:

The most recent median workplace-based affordability ratio for Bradford (2019) is 5.23.

Where an adjustment is to be made, the formula is:

$$\text{Adjustment factor} = \left( \frac{\text{Local affordability ratio} - 4}{4} \right) \times 0.25 + 1$$

$$\text{Adjustment factor} = (((5.23-4)/4) \times 0.25) + 1 = 1.076875$$

Minimum annual local housing need figure = (adjustment factor) x projected household growth.

For Bradford this would be: Minimum annual local housing need figure = (1.076875) x 1,577.5 = **1,699<sup>2</sup>**.

#### Step 3 - Capping the level of any increase

The Bradford Core Strategy was adopted in 2017, and is less than five years old, therefore the local housing need figure is capped at 40% above average annual housing requirement figure set out in the most recently adopted strategic policies. The Core Strategy has a housing requirement of 2,476dpa, 40% above the 2,476 would be 3,466dpa. The minimum annual LHN is therefore below this cap, and therefore does not limit the increase to the local authority's minimum annual housing need figure.

#### Step 4 – Cities and Urban Centres Uplift

A 35% uplift is then applied for those urban local authorities in the top 20 cities and urban centres list. This includes Bradford.

The 35% uplift for Bradford would be 1,698.77 x 0.35 = 594.5695

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<sup>2</sup> 1,698.77

Therefore, the minimum LHN for Bradford as calculated by the standard method is **2,293<sup>3</sup> dwellings each year.**

9. The HBF is concerned that the Bradford Local Plan housing requirement, at 1,704dpa is significantly below the identified LHN of 2,293dpa. The Plan<sup>4</sup> states that *'based on current evidence it is considered that the additional 35% uplift of the standard method cannot be realistically met in terms of deliverable land supply, strategic constraints (Green Belt) and potential significant adverse impacts within the Regional City of Bradford'*. The HBF does not consider this to be consistent with national policy or the Government's objective to boost the supply of homes.
10. It should be noted that the standard method identifies the minimum LHN and there may be circumstances, as set out in the PPG, when it is appropriate to plan for a higher housing need figure than the standard method identifies. These circumstances include where there are growth strategies, strategic infrastructure improvements, an unmet need from neighbouring authorities or where previous levels of housing delivery in the area or previous assessments of need are significantly greater than the outcome of the standard method. The HBF recommends that the Council give further consideration to these circumstances.
11. The HBF considers that the Council should amend the housing requirement to better reflect the LHN identified by the standard method, and to take into consideration the circumstances where it may be appropriate to plan for a higher figure.

#### Previously developed land (PDL)

12. This part of the policy states that at least 50% of new homes will be on PDL, although the proportions may vary across the district.
13. The HBF supports the Council in making as much use as possible of previously developed land (PDL) in accordance with 2019 NPPF. However, the HBF considers that it is important to ensure that the prioritisation of PDL does not compromise the delivery of homes in sustainable locations to meet local needs. The HBF also considers it will be important to consider the future deliverability of intensely developed residential schemes, which will be dependent on the viability of PDL and demand for high density urban living post Covid-19.

#### Affordable Housing

14. This part of the Policy seeks to ensure that approximately 25% of the total housing requirement is affordable housing, this will be delivered through policy HO5: Affordable Housing.
15. The HBF generally supports the Council in seeking to meet their affordable housing needs. 25% of the housing requirement would be 426dpa. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2019) states that the overall net annual imbalance is calculated to

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<sup>3</sup> 2,293.3395

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 3.8.11 of the Local Plan Preferred Options

be 441 affordable dwellings each year. The PPG<sup>5</sup> states that *'total affordable housing need can then be considered in the context of its likely delivery as a proportion of mixed market and affordable housing developments, taking into account the probable percentage of affordable housing to be delivered by eligible market housing led developments. An increase in the total housing figures included in the plan may need to be considered where it could help deliver the required number of affordable homes'*. The HBF considers that the Council need to ensure that this affordable housing need is given consideration in determining an appropriate housing requirement.

#### **Policy SP9: Climate Change, Environmental Sustainability and Resource Use**

16. This policy seeks to achieve a target of net zero carbon emissions by 2038, by ensuring that new development minimises emissions as much as possible. It is noted that this policy is setting a target ahead of the Government target of net Zero Carbon by 2050. The HBF does not generally object to encouragement for the need to minimise the carbon emissions. The HBF supports moving towards greater energy efficiency via a nationally consistent set of standards and a timetable for achieving any enhancements which is universally understood and technically implementable. The HBF acknowledges that the Government has not enacted its proposed amendments to the Planning & Energy Act 2008 to prevent the Council from stipulating energy performance standards that exceed the Building Regulations. However, the HBF considers that the key to success is standardisation and avoidance of every Council in the country specifying its own approach to energy efficiency, which would undermine economies of scale for both product manufacturers, suppliers and developers.
17. The Government has consulted (ended on 7th February 2020) on The Future Homes Standard. The UK has set in law a target to bring all its greenhouse gas emission to net zero by 2050. New and existing homes account for 20% of emissions. It is the Government's intention to future proof new homes with low carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency. The Government wants to create certainty and consistency. An uplift to Part L standards will improve the energy efficiency of new homes and prepare housebuilders and supply chains in readiness for the further uplift in 2025 to meet the Future Homes Standard.

#### **Policy HO1: Housing Delivery, Strategic Sites and Managing Growth and Section 5.**

18. This policy looks to meet the housing requirement set out in Policy SP8 by allocating a range of sites of different types, sizes and locations. The allocations are not set out within the policy they set out in Section 5 of the Plan, with relevant site proformas.
19. The HBF considers it may be beneficial for the policy to provide a table summarising the allocations, their size and their proposed capacity. This could be similar to table 4.14.1 but to include all of the sites.
20. The HBF is keen that the Council produces a plan which can deliver against its housing requirement. To do this it is important that a strategy is put in place which provides a sufficient range of sites to provide enough sales outlets to enable delivery to be

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<sup>5</sup> PPG ID: 2a-024-20190220

maintained at the required levels throughout the plan period. The widest possible range of sites by both size and market location are required so that small, medium and large housebuilding companies have access to suitable land to offer the widest possible range of products. A mix of sites provides choice for consumers, allows places to grow in sustainable ways and creates opportunities to diversify the construction sector. Under the NPPF<sup>6</sup>, the Councils should identify at least 10% of the housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare or else demonstrate strong reasons for not achieving this target. The HBF and our members can provide valuable advice on issues of housing delivery and would be keen to work proactively with the Council on this issue.

21. The Plan should ensure the availability of a sufficient supply of deliverable and developable land to deliver the Council's housing requirement. This sufficiency of housing land supply (HLS) should meet the housing requirement, ensure the maintenance of a 5 Year Housing Land Supply (5YHLS), and achieve Housing Delivery Test (HDT) performance measurements. The HBF also strongly recommends that the plan allocates more sites than required to meet the housing requirement as a buffer. This buffer should be sufficient to deal with any under-delivery which is likely to occur from some sites. Such an approach would be consistent with the NPPF requirements for the plan to be positively prepared and flexible.
22. The HBF does not wish to comment upon the acceptability or otherwise of individual sites. It is, however, important that all the sites contained within the plan are deliverable over the plan period and planned to an appropriate strategy. The HBF would expect the spatial distribution of sites to follow a logical hierarchy, provide an appropriate development pattern and support sustainable development within all market areas.
23. The Council's assumptions on sites in relation to delivery and capacity should be realistic based on evidence supported by the parties responsible for housing delivery and sense checked by the Council based on local knowledge and historical empirical data.

### **Policy HO2: Housing Density**

24. This policy states that unless site specific considerations indicate otherwise development should achieve a minimum density of 35 dwellings per hectare (dph), with developments in locations including town centres and areas well served by public transport and local amenities will be expected to achieve densities of at least 50dph. The setting of residential density standards should be undertaken in accordance with the NPPF<sup>7</sup> where policies should be set to optimise the use of land. A range of density standards specific to different areas of the city is appropriate to ensure that any proposed density is appropriate to the character of the surrounding area.
25. The flexibility provided by this policy in relation to certain considerations is noted, this will allow developers to react to some site-specific issues. However, further amendments could be made to create greater flexibility to allow developers to take account of the

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<sup>6</sup> Paragraph 68 of the NPPF

<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 123 of the NPPF

evidence in relation to market aspirations, deliverability and viability, the site's context and accessibility.

26. The Council will also need to consider its approach to density in relation to other policies in the plan. Policies such as open space provision, cycle and bin storage, housing mix, residential space standards, accessible and adaptable dwellings and parking provision will all impact upon the density which can be delivered upon site.

#### **Policy HO4: Housing Mix**

27. This policy looks for all major residential development to incorporate a mix of housing types, sizes, prices and tenures. It suggests the exact mix should be based both on market demand and evidence of local housing need. The HBF understands the need for a mix of house types, sizes and tenures and is generally supportive of providing a range and choice of homes to meet the needs of the local area. The HBF recommends a flexible approach is taken regarding housing mix which recognises that needs and demand will vary from area to area and site to site; ensures that the scheme is viable; and provides an appropriate mix for the location and market.

#### **Policy HO5: Affordable Housing**

28. This policy requires affordable housing contributions on all major residential development, it sets different targets based on zones and whether the site is PDL or greenfield. The affordable housing requirement ranges from 10% in Inner Bradford and Keighley to 40% on greenfield sites in Wharfedale. The policy goes on to suggest that the tenure mix will be 65% for affordable rent and 35% affordable home ownership products. It also states that in line with national policy at least 10% of the overall affordable housing contribution from a site should be available for affordable home ownership.
29. The Financial Viability Assessment Report (January 2020) sets out the latest viability position. It highlights that there are viability issues in in the lower and lower medium value zones and recommends a reduced affordable housing requirement in these areas. For the lower zones the Assessment recommends reducing the affordable housing requirement to nothing, although it does suggest that it may be possible to set the level at 10% in line with the NPPF and consider proactive interventions in the market to support delivery. It is not apparent from the policy what proactive interventions the Council proposes.
30. The HBF notes that the NPPF<sup>8</sup> states that where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership, unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area. The HBF are concerned this has been misinterpreted by the Council. The 10% affordable home ownership is a proportion of the overall number of homes provided, not from the affordable housing contribution. As such if the Council is following the recommendation from the Viability Assessment in terms of the lower value areas the affordable housing provision from these areas should be only

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<sup>8</sup> Paragraph 64 of the NPPF

in the form of affordable home ownership homes. The HBF considers that the Council should also give further consideration of this NPPF requirement in relation to the tenure split proposed across other areas too. As at present it would not be possible to provide both the NPPF 10% affordable home ownership homes and the meet the proposed affordable housing split set in the policy.

31. The HBF supports the need to address the affordable housing requirements of the borough. The NPPF<sup>9</sup> is, however, clear that the derivation of affordable housing policies must not only take account of need but also viability and deliverability. The Council should be mindful that it is unrealistic to negotiate every site on a one-by-one basis because the base-line aspiration of a policy or combination of policies is set too high as this will jeopardise future housing delivery.

### **Policy HO6: Self-build & Custom Housebuilding**

32. This policy looks for residential sites of over 100 dwellings to provide at least 5% of the dwelling plots for sale to self-builders. Many of our members will be able to assist the custom build sector either through the physical building of dwellings on behalf of the homeowner or through the provision of plots for sale to custom builders. The HBF are, therefore, not opposed to the idea of increasing the self-build and custom build sector for its potential contribution to the overall housing supply. However, most of the Council's approach is restrictive rather than permissive by requiring the inclusion of such housing on developments of over 100 dwellings. This policy approach only changes the house building delivery mechanism from one form of house building company to another without any consequential additional contribution to boosting housing supply. Meaning that as currently proposed this policy will not assist in boosting the supply of housing and may even limit the deliverability of some sites and homes. The HBF would recommend appropriate evidence is collated to ensure that house building delivery from this source provides an additional contribution to boosting housing supply. This is likely to include engaging with landowners and working with custom build developers to maximise opportunities.
33. The HBF does not consider that the Council has appropriate evidence to support the requirement for 5% of the total plots on developments of over 100 dwellings to provide service plots for custom or self-build housing. PPG<sup>10</sup> sets out how custom and self-build housing needs can be assessed. The SHMA (2019) highlights that 1,175 people were registered on the Council's self-build register, it provides no analysis or evaluation of this figure, and does not provide any other evidence or information.

### **Policy HO7 Specialist Housing and Accommodation**

34. This policy states that where development falls within Use Class C3, affordable housing provision will be required in line with Policy H05 Affordable Housing. The HBF considers that the Council will need to ensure that this requirement is appropriate in terms of viability for these types of developments.

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<sup>9</sup> Paragraph 34 of the NPPF

<sup>10</sup> PPG ID: 67-003-20190722

## Policy HO9: Housing Standards

35. All new build dwellings should meet Building Regulation requirement M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings'.
36. On major development sites over 0.5 hectare or 10 or more homes a minimum of 5% of dwellings should meet the Building Regulations requirement M4(3) 'wheelchair user dwellings', designed to be wheelchair accessible, or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users.
37. The HBF is generally supportive of providing homes that are suitable to meet the needs of older people and disabled people. However, if the Council wishes to adopt the higher optional standards for accessible, adaptable and wheelchair homes the Council should only do so by applying the criteria set out in the PPG.
38. PPG<sup>11</sup> identifies the type of evidence required to introduce such a policy, including the likely future need; the size, location, type and quality of dwellings needed; the accessibility and adaptability of the existing stock; how the needs vary across different housing tenures; and the overall viability. It is incumbent on the Council to provide a local assessment evidencing the specific case for Bradford which justifies the inclusion of optional higher standards for accessible and adaptable homes in its Local Plan policy. If the Council can provide the appropriate evidence and this policy is to be included, then the HBF recommends that an appropriate transition period is included within the policy.
39. The PPG also identifies other requirements for the policy including the need to consider site specific factors such as vulnerability to flooding, site topography and other circumstances, this is not just in relation to the ability to provide step-free access.
40. The policy goes on to require all new market and affordable homes should, as a minimum, meet the Nationally Described Space Standard (NDSS) for internal space in new dwellings. The NDSS as introduced by Government, are intended to be optional and can only be introduced where there is a clear need and they retain development viability. As such they were introduced on a 'need to have' rather than a 'nice to have' basis.
41. PPG<sup>12</sup> identifies the type of evidence required to introduce such a policy. It states that 'where a need for internal space standards is identified, local planning authorities should provide justification for requiring internal space policies. Local planning authorities should take account of the following areas:
  - **Need** – evidence should be provided on the size and type of dwellings currently being built in the area, to ensure the impacts of adopting space standards can be properly assessed, for example, to consider any potential impact on meeting demand for starter homes.
  - **Viability** – the impact of adopting the space standard should be considered as part of a plan's viability assessment with account taken of the impact of potentially larger

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<sup>11</sup> PPG ID: 56-007-20150327

<sup>12</sup> PPG ID: 56-020-20150327



dwellings on land supply. Local planning authorities will also need to consider impacts on affordability where a space standard is to be adopted.

- **Timing** – there may need to be a reasonable transitional period following adoption of a new policy on space standards to enable developers to factor the cost of space standards into future land acquisitions’.

42. The Council will need robust justifiable evidence to introduce the NDSS, based on the criteria set out above. The HBF considers that if the Government had expected all properties to be built to NDSS that they would have made these standards mandatory not optional.
43. The council will encourage the use of new and innovative smart waste collection systems including underground bin systems where appropriate and feasible, in particular, on larger strategic sites and developments of 500 properties or more or for high density developments. The HBF has concerns about the viability of this policy, at the moment it is not clear what the costs for these smart waste collections might be, but it is likely any underground provision would add significantly to the cost of any development. The HBF also has concerns in relation to the waste authority’s ability to work with these waste requirements, and whether they will be committed to working with these smart solutions for the life of the dwellings, buildings or developments provided.

#### **Policy EN2: Biodiversity and Geodiversity**

44. All development (except householder applications) should deliver a measurable net gain in biodiversity value compared with the pre-development baseline. Proposals should be supported by evidence to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain using the current Defra Biodiversity Metric.
45. The Council will know that the Government is already looking at the most appropriate approach to biodiversity net gain. The HBF considers that the Council should not deviate from the Government’s proposals on biodiversity gain as set out in the Environment Bill. This legislation will require development to achieve a 10% net gain for biodiversity. It is the Government’s opinion that 10% strikes the right balance between the ambition for development and reversing environmental decline. 10% gain provides certainty in achieving environmental outcomes, deliverability of development and costs for developers. 10% will be a mandatory national requirement, but it is not a cap on the aspirations of developers who want to voluntarily go further. The mandatory requirement offers developers a level playing field nationally and reduced risks of unexpected costs and delays.
46. The Council’s policy approach should also reflect the Government’s proposals for a transition period of two years as set out in the Environment Bill. The Government proposes to work with stakeholders on the specifics of this transition period, including accounting for sites with outline planning permission, in order to provide clear and timely guidance on understanding what will be required and when.
47. The Government will issue guidance to Councils on the importance of proportionality in their application of planning policy. So that sites without reasonable opportunities to

achieve net gain through on-site habitat delivery will not face risks of delay through rigid or prescriptive requirements.

48. There are significant additional costs associated with biodiversity gain, which should be fully accounted for in the Council's updated viability assessment. The Government has confirmed that more work needs to be undertaken to address viability concerns raised by the housebuilding industry in order that net gain does not prevent, delay or reduce housing delivery.

### **Policy EN3: Trees and Woodlands**

49. New trees and woodland should be planted on all new developments in both public and private areas, including a fruit tree in every garden. The HBF would like to know what the justification and evidence is for the requirement for a fruit tree in every garden, this is an additional cost, that a new resident may not want and may remove once moved into the property. The HBF recommends that this part of the policy is deleted.
50. Where existing trees have been identified as suitable for removal at pre-application stage, then replacements should be planted within public areas of the development at a ratio of three new trees for every tree lost. The HBF would like to know what the justification and evidence is for this ratio of replacement. It is considered that if the Council are seeking a 'net environmental' gain that this could be achieved in many other ways than seeking a 3:1 tree ratio. The HBF recommends that this part of the policy is deleted.

### **Policy EN10: Energy**

51. This policy looks for all new residential developments to maximise opportunities for the use of on-site renewable and low carbon energy sources, where this is practical and viable. It goes on to state that all major residential developments should look to provide a site wide heating and cooling system where reasonable and practical and to connect to wider district heating and cooling networks both for energy supply and export, especially where these utilise renewable energy. It also states that residential development of 50 or more dwellings should strongly aim to achieve zero net-carbon emissions, with all residential developments to meet Future Homes Standard by 2025.
52. As set out previous, it is noted that this policy is setting a target ahead of the Government target of net Zero Carbon by 2050. The HBF does not generally object to encouragement for the need to minimise the carbon emissions. The HBF supports moving towards greater energy efficiency via a nationally consistent set of standards and a timetable for achieving any enhancements which is universally understood and technically implementable. The HBF acknowledges that the Government has not enacted its proposed amendments to the Planning & Energy Act 2008 to prevent the Council from stipulating energy performance standards that exceed the Building Regulations. However, the HBF considers that the key to success is standardisation and avoidance of every Council in the country specifying its own approach to energy efficiency, which would undermine economies of scale for both product manufacturers, suppliers and developers.

53. The Government has consulted (ended on 7th February 2020) on The Future Homes Standard. The UK has set in law a target to bring all its greenhouse gas emission to net zero by 2050. New and existing homes account for 20% of emissions. It is the Government's intention to future proof new homes with low carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency. The Government wants to create certainty and consistency. An uplift to Part L standards will improve the energy efficiency of new homes and prepare housebuilders and supply chains in readiness for the further uplift in 2025 to meet the Future Homes Standard.

### **Future Engagement**

54. I trust that the Council will find these comments useful as it continues to progress its Local Plan. I would be happy to discuss these issues in greater detail or assist in facilitating discussions with the wider house building industry.

55. The HBF would like to be kept informed of all forthcoming consultations upon the Local Plan and associated documents. Please use the contact details provided below for future correspondence.

Yours sincerely,



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