

Sent by email to: ldf@lewes.gov.uk

03/09/2021

Dear Sir/ Madam

Response by the Home Builders Federation to the consultation on Lewes District Local Plan

1. Thank you for consulting the Home Builders Federation (HBF) on the Issues and Options for the Lewes District Local Plan. The HBF is the principal representative body of the housebuilding industry in England and Wales and our representations reflect the views of discussions with our membership of national and multinational corporations through to regional developers and small local housebuilders. Our members account for over 80% of all new housing built in England and Wales in any one year.

Energy efficiency, sustainable construction, and renewable energy

Q1.1 How can the new Local Plan best promote energy efficiency in new development and the Council's ambition of net zero carbon? Should the new Local Plan work towards setting lower carbon emissions targets for new homes/buildings than those set out in Building Regulations?

2. The housebuilding industry, through the HBF, recognises that there is a need to improve the environmental performance of new residential development. In order to achieve this, we established, with a wide range of partners, the Future Homes Task Force. This task force examined how the house building industry can work toward delivering net zero homes by 2050. The initial outcomes of this work can be found at <https://www.futurehomes.org.uk/> with a summary of the Delivery Plan resulting from this work attached to this response.
3. The delivery plan published by the task force in July outlines the need to operate on a collective basis recognising the need for housebuilders, their supply network and the trades people building homes to successfully transition to the delivery of low carbon homes. In addition, it recognises the need for both national and local government alongside housebuilders to ensure those people buying new homes are confident in the technologies and systems being used. As such the HBF consider a national and standardised approach to improving the energy efficiency of buildings to be the most effective approach in that it balances improvements to building performance with the continued delivery of housing and infrastructure. The HBF considers a universal standard is necessary to allow research and



development and supply chains to focus upon responding to agreed national targets, and for training providers to plan their programmes to equip the labour force to meet these new requirements. Importantly, a phased approach to delivering these improvements ensures those people buying new homes are fully aware of the new technologies being used in their homes. It is vital that consumers are confident with the technology being used in their new homes and increase the wider appetite for similar standards to be adopted in the existing stock.

4. The HBF considers it important that Councils recognise that it will take time to ensure that the technology and supply chains required to achieve the significant reductions in emission from new homes required by the Future Homes Standard. There is still considerable work to do to ensure that supply chains are in place to meet demand from the housebuilding industry as well as having a workforce with the technical skills in place to deliver and maintain systems such as ground and air source heat pumps on a much larger scale. It is important that these systems when they are used work to ensure that the public are satisfied with the product and can rely on it to meet their needs.
5. As the Council are aware the Future Homes Standard that the Government are proposing to introduce will ensure that from 2025 new homes will emit 75% fewer emissions than current standards. To deliver further reductions and achieve the national commitment of net zero emissions by 2050 will require the decarbonisation of energy supply at a national level rather than from the Council setting additional requirements for new homes above those set by Government. As such the HBF consider the technical requirements of new homes with regard to energy efficiency and CO₂ emissions should be considered nationally through changes to the Building Regulations and different standards should not be set within local plans. Only through a nationally consistent and phased approach to the introduction of the new standards and technologies will the house building industry be able to maintain housing supply, ensure consumer confidence and deliver the required improvements in emissions.

Q1.2 Should the new Local Plan require all development proposals to:

- Provide evidence of circular economy principles and waste reduction – requiring retention of existing buildings unless evidence of need to demolish?
- Evidence reductions in carbon by prioritising the use of materials and construction techniques that have smaller ecological and carbon footprints?
- Consider the lifecycle of the building and whether it can be easily adapted to meet changing needs?

6. The HBF do not consider it necessary for local plans to require development proposals to provide evidence in their planning applications as to their principles of waste reduction, the construction techniques they use or the life cycle of the homes they produce. These issues should be dealt with at a national level to ensure that there is a standardised approach to measuring embodied carbon in different materials to ensure the expansion in the supply of low and zero carbon materials. Only with consistent information on such matters will it be possible to

effectively consider the embodied carbon in new homes within the decision-making process.

7. We do not agree with the proposal that the Council should require the retention of existing buildings and require the developer to provide evidence in relation to the circular economy of the need to demolish. Whilst retention of existing buildings may in some circumstances be appropriate in other cases it will prevent the most effective use of land, make development of a site unviable and provide a less energy efficient building compared with the one that replaces it.

Q1.3 Should the new Local Plan require all new development to include small-scale renewable energy generation on site? And Q1.4 Should the new Local Plan require all large-scale developments to consider community scale renewable energy generation?

8. With regard to renewable energy generation on small and large sites the Council will need to ensure any policy requirements recognise that it may not be feasible for all development to deliver decentralised energy generation on site. This may be due to the location of the site or the impact on the viability of that development. The cost of delivering community scale renewable energy generation in particular may reduce the developable land on larger sites as well as add a considerable additional cost. Such additional costs, in combination with other policy costs, may lead to as development becoming unviable. The Council will need to carefully consider all of the policy costs it places on development and ensure that these are all included within its viability assessment.

Climate adaptation measures

Q1.6 Having read the information above, should the new Local Plan set out more specific requirements for tree planting in new development?

9. The HBF recognises that the latest iteration of the NPPF encourages the delivery of trees within a development. However, a detailed and prescriptive policy on how trees are provided in new development can be a barrier to both new development and the most effective approach the delivery of trees on a site. Prescription as to what must be provided and where will add to costs and prevent flexible delivery of trees within a development whether this be on streets, in public open space or in front and rear gardens. Other requirements regarding lighting, parking, signage, vehicle charging will also impact on a sites ability to deliver trees, in particular street trees.
10. It is therefore essential that policy relating to trees in new development allow the developer to tailor its approach to delivering trees and should consider the whole site. Flexibility is needed to enable developers to meet the requirement to provide trees without compromising other aspects of the scheme, including viability. The Council will be aware that the costs of maintain and managing street trees in future will place an additional financial burden on development and in combination with other policy costs, could make some development unviable.

1.10 Should the new Local Plan support the Council's Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy more stringent (100l) target for water consumption in new buildings or go further?

11. Whilst we recognise the importance of reducing water consumption in water stressed areas the Government considers that this can be achieved through the application of the higher technical standard that limits consumption to 110 litres per person per day. There is no scope in national policy for the Council to set a requirement of 100 litres, or less, per person per day.

Modal shift

Q1.11 To encourage modal shift, should the new Local Plan require EVCP at all new development and should that be at the level in the Councils EVCP TAN?

12. The HBF recognise that electric vehicles will be part of the solution to transitioning to a low carbon future. The Department of Transport consultation on Electric Vehicle Charging in Residential & Non-Residential Buildings (ended on 7th October 2019) set out the Government's preferred option to introduce a new requirement for EVCPs under Part S of the Building Regulations. The inclusion of EVCP requirements within the Building Regulations will introduce a standardised consistent approach to EVCPs in new buildings across the country. The requirements proposed apply to car parking spaces in or adjacent to buildings and the intention is for there to be one charge point per dwelling rather than per parking space. It is proposed that charging points must be at least Mode 3 or equivalent with a minimum power rating output of 7kW fitted with a universal socket to charge all types of electric vehicle currently on the market. The HBF would therefore suggest that because of the Government's proposals to change Building Regulations it is not necessary to set out a separate standard in the local plan.

Q1.12 In order to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport should the new Local Plan set higher cycle parking requirements for new residential development than current East Sussex County Council standards?

13. Rather than focus on additional cycle parking in residential development the Council needs to consider what the barriers are to increased cycling within Lewes as whole. The real issue may be about road safety or the lack of safe and secure cycle parking in town centres, at stations, schools, and other public places. Without a wider consideration this issue a requirement for increased cycle parking in residential development will in all likelihood make very little difference unless other changes are implemented by the Council.

Biodiversity net gain

Q2.1 Should we require a 20% biodiversity net gain in all major developments?

14. The requirement for a 20% net gain in biodiversity is not sound. No justification has been provided as to why Lewes is any different to the rest of the country and should set a higher requirement for net biodiversity gains. If Government considers 10% sufficient to mitigate the impact of new development in future, then this should also be an appropriate level of net gain for Canterbury. It is important to recognise that the Environment Bill does not set this as a minimum and at present there is no suggestion that policy allows for a higher requirement to be set in local plans.
15. It must also be remembered that a 20% requirement will have a significant additional cost to development. The costs set out by Government in its impact assessment indicates that overall, a 20% net gain requirement would lead to a 19% increase in the direct costs to developers. Whilst this evidence is a helpful broad assumption as to the cost of delivering net biodiversity gains it is important to recognise that this assessment was based on estimates at a national and regional averages and so is not directly comparable to local delivery where costs could be higher. As such headroom must be available in the plan wide viability assessment to take account of higher local costs.
16. It is also important to note that the Government's impact assessment for a 20% net gain requirement is based on scenario B where the majority of the net gain is delivered on site. An additional 10% of net gain would not necessarily follow this scenario with more offsite delivery being required. A higher degree of offsite mitigation is likely to be required in order to deliver a 20% net gain which will mean a far higher cost to the developer. If scenario C of the Government's impact assessment is taken as a broad assumption as to costs facing a developer, the proposed 20% net gain requirements could see costs rise significantly per hectare. If all of the additional 10% net gain above the proposed legislation being suggested by the Council had to be delivered offsite that could see costs rise by over £60,000 per hectare¹, a considerable additional burden and one that could impact on the viability and deliverability of some sites. Even if delivery could be achieved on site a higher net gain requirement would require more land reducing the developable area of a site, reducing the gross development value and site viability.

Nature Recovery Network

Q2.2 Should the new Local Plan seek to identify/allocate sites to provide off-site biodiversity net gain?

17. The identification of land that can be used to provide biodiversity offsetting would be beneficial to those developing smaller sites where it is more difficult to achieve net gains on site. However, the Council must be clear that developers would not be required to use allocated sites should they chose a different approach to delivering off-site biodiversity net gain.

¹ Table 14 of Defra Biodiversity net gain and local nature recovery strategies Impact Assessment indicates scenario C would cost developers in the South East of England £63,841 per hectare to deliver 10% net gains off site.

How many homes?

18. In assessing the minimum number of homes that should be planned for in this local plan the Council have used the standard method and then adjusted this to remove housing needs arising in those areas covered by the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA). The Council correctly note that the NPPF allows local planning areas that do not conform to local authority boundaries, such as national parks, to use an alternate method in assessing needs. The approach used by the Council takes the proportion of existing households within both areas and applies this to the outcomes of the standard method. This simplistic approach results in a housing need for this local plan of 602 dwellings per annum (dpa) and 180 dpa in the SDNPA. Clearly such an approach does not consider the relative propensity for households to form in the national park compared to the rest of Lewes and some further consideration of this issue will be necessary moving forward.
19. However, a more pertinent issue will be how many homes can be delivered in those parts of Lewes District Council that are within the SDNPA. The national park designation is a constraint that will limit the number of homes that can be delivered in those areas. This will most likely result in unmet need for housing arising in those areas. Paragraph 61 of the NPPF states that "*in addition to the local housing need figure any needs that cannot be met within a neighbouring area should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for*". Logic would therefore dictate that any needs that cannot be met in those areas of the district covered by the national park should be addressed in this local plan. Moving forward it is essential that the Council works with the SDNPA to establish how many homes are likely to be delivered over the next 20 years in those areas of district covered by the SDNPA in order to assess how many additional homes they will need to plan for.

Options for delivering growth

Q3.2 What is your preferred option, or combination of options?

20. In terms of the options for delivering growth the Council will need to ensure that the chosen strategy meets housing needs. The HBF recognises that this may be more difficult given the constraints facing the district and it is why it will be essential that there is early and proactive partnership working with neighbouring authorities to ensure development needs are met in full. In examining the options put forward by the Council it would appear that to meet needs will most likely require a combination of the suggested options rather than a singular focus on, say, a new settlement. In considering a more plural approach to the location of new development the Council will be more likely to meet its housing needs as well as find and allocate a wide variety of sites to provide the flexibility in its supply required to ensure a consistent supply of homes across the plan period.

21. In our experience local plans that rely too heavily on large strategic sites within their local plans to meet needs can struggle to show their local plans are deliverable. In order to meet needs and show a five-year land supply councils often include overly optimistic delivery rates on larger sites which are often revised before or at examination as these are challenged. This can leave shortfalls in supply that need to be addressed through additional allocations or an early review. For example, at the recent Brentwood Local Plan examination where the Council went from having a 10% buffer in supply to a shortfall of 5% from submission to hearings as delivery trajectories on strategic sites were revised.
22. The Council is also no doubt aware of the Uttlesford Local Plan that was withdrawn by the Council on the recommendation of the Inspectors examining that plan. The Uttlesford Local Plan relied heavily on three new towns which delivered the vast majority of their housing needs at the end of the plan period. As well as considering two of these settlements to be undeliverable they also concluded that the trajectories for delivery were overly optimistic and that, even if all the new settlements were delivered, they could not show a five-year land supply with significant shortfalls against the requirement in the middle of the plan period. The inspectors also noted in their overall conclusions that the strategy would lead to a stepped trajectory that unreasonably delayed addressing the issue of housing affordability and failed to test options with fewer homes in new settlements with more homes in other settlements.
23. This is not to say that a new settlement, or the strategic expansion of an existing settlement, should not be a key element of the land supply in this local plan. Such allocations provide a secure supply of land for development well into the future. However, in making such allocations we would advise the Council to take a cautious approach recognising the complexity of delivering such development and the impact this has on the point at which such schemes will start delivering new homes. Too often Councils are overly optimistic about the delivery of new settlements in the early stages of plan preparation ultimately leading to trajectories being pushed back later on in plan preparation once the strategy has been decided upon in order to maintain a five-year land supply. In some cases, this can lead to plans being found unsound.
24. A sound approach is therefore one that seeks to balance the delivery of larger strategic sites with the allocation of small and medium sized sites that come forward in the forward in the first half of the plan period. Such an approach can provide a consistent supply of homes that will help meet housing needs earlier than if the Council rely on new settlements to deliver the majority of their housing towards the end of the plan period.

Affordable housing

Q4.1 Should the new Local Plan seek the maximum viable affordable housing target on sites of 10 or more dwellings?

25. The Council correctly recognise that affordable housing policies should not be set at rates that make development unviable. However, it is important to note that paragraph 57 of the NPPF and paragraph 10-002 of PPG establish that policies in local plans should seek to minimise the number of applications that require negotiation on affordable housing and other policy requirements. In order to deliver the Government's expectations that decisions makers should be able to assume a development can meet all the obligations within the local plan, the Council will need to ensure its viability assessment takes full account of all the costs being placed on development.
26. It is also important to recognise that plan wide viability assessments will inevitably make broad assumptions with regard to build costs and only test typologies it is important that policies do not set requirements that maximise delivery of affordable housing but are at the margins of what is viable. In seeking to maximise delivery there is the risk that the Council will end up negotiating on the majority of applications, an approach that is inconsistent with national policy. The Council needs to therefore ensure that there is sufficient head room within viability to ensure the assumption can be made that the site is viable whilst meeting all the requirements of the local plan.
27. Given that the viability assessment is still to be published it is not possible to comment on whether the Council's policy requirements, such as those for affordable housing, are viable and the plan as a whole is deliverable. However, we would like to make some broad comments on viability in relation to the approach established in the NPPF and its supporting guidance.
28. To support local planning authorities in preparing their viability evidence the HBF has prepared a briefing note, attached to this response, which sets out some common concerns with viability testing of local plans under the latest guidance and how these should be addressed. Whilst this note focuses on all aspects of the viability testing of the residential development and should be taken into account, we would like to highlight four particular issues with whole plan viability assessments.
29. The first issue is with regard to the approach taken to abnormal infrastructure costs. These are the costs above base construction and external costs that are required to ensure the site is deliverable. Prior to the 2019 NPPF viability assessments have taken the approach that these cannot be quantified and were addressed through the site-by-site negotiation. However, this option is now significantly restricted by paragraph 57 of the 2019 NPPF. As such these abnormal costs must be factored into whole plan viability assessments. We recognise that the very nature of an abnormal costs is difficult to quantify, but it is a fact that they are often substantial and can have a significant impact on viability. Where and how these costs arise is also variable. They can occur in site preparation but can also arise with regard to the increasing costs of delivering infrastructure, such as upgrades to increase the capacity of utilities. It is also the case that abnormal costs

are higher on brownfield sites where there can be a higher degree of uncertainty as to the nature of the site and the work required to make it developable.

30. Whilst we recognise that abnormal costs are expected to come off the land value, we are concerned that if abnormal costs are high then it will result in sites not being developed as the land value will be insufficient to incentivise the landowner to sell. It is therefore important that a significant buffer is included within the viability assessment to take account of these costs if the Council are to state with certainty that those sites allocated in the plan will come forward without negotiation.
31. Secondly, we would encourage the Council to use the upper end of any of the ranges suggested with regards to fees and profit margins. Again, these will vary from developer to developer but given that the Government want to minimise negotiation on planning obligations it would make sense to use the highest point of any range. The changing landscape with regard to viability assessment could lead to development slowing significantly if the correct variables are not taken into account.
32. Thirdly, the council must ensure that all the policy costs associated with the local plan are included within the viability assessment. Whilst affordable housing and infrastructure contributions from the majority of the additional costs that are placed on developers by the Council it is important that the cumulative impact of all policies are tested. With regard to the local plan review the Council will need to consider the impact of its proposed policies on bio-diversity net gains, electric vehicle charging, sustainable design and construction; and renewable energy. The viability assessment will also need consider the impact of future national policies on viability and whether there is sufficient headroom to ensure these standards can be addressed alongside the policies in the local plan.
33. Finally, the approach to land values needs to be a balanced approach and one that recognises that there will be a point at which land will just not come forward if values are too low to take account of policy and infrastructure costs. There are a variety of reasons why a landowner is looking to sell their land and it cannot be assumed that they will absorb significant reductions in land values to meet policy costs. Land is a long-term investment and the returns being offered must take account of this.

Q4.2 Should the new Local Plan maintain the Council's preference for an affordable housing tenure split of 75% affordable rented homes and 25% intermediate homes, or should it pursue a different approach?

34. The Council recognise that 25% of all affordable homes will need to be first homes. It would appear from the consultation document that this tenure will form all of the for sale affordable housing tenures with the Council maintaining its requirement for 75% of affordable homes to be for affordable rent. The Council may wish to consider whether it should reduce the affordable rent component and allow some

other forms of intermediate tenure outside of first homes for those not able access such housing. In relation to viability testing of first homes it will be necessary for the Council's viability study to recognise that whilst these homes are considered an affordable tenure they are sold on the open market. The developer therefore takes all the risk in developing and selling these homes and should expect a 20% profit from their sale rather than the 6% profit that is expected for the delivery of affordable homes where the developer is effectively being contracted by the RSL to supply these units.

Q4.3 Should the new Local Plan have a locally specific approach to supporting the development of 'First Home exception sites' (as it currently has for rural exception sites) or should the Council rely on national planning policy?

35. The delivery of first homes through exception sites should be an approach considered by the Council, especially where this may bring forward sites that may not traditionally be allocated through the local plan.

Housing type mix and density

Q4.5 Should the new Local Plan go beyond the mandatory building regulations to ensure that a proportion of new homes are accessible and adaptable? In what circumstances should this be applied?

36. If the Council wish to apply the optional technical standard for accessible and adaptable homes, it will need to ensure that it has the necessary evidence to support any proposed policy as required by national policy and its supporting guidance.

Q4.6 How can the new Local Plan be more responsive to the needs of younger households, older people and custom/self-builders?

Older people's housing

37. The HBF consider it important that local plans look to allocate specific sites to meet the needs of older people. In particular the Council must look, in the first instance, to allocate those sites submitted for older people's accommodation that are in the most sustainable locations close to key services. We would suggest that the local plan goes further and looks to set out in policy:

- a target for the delivery of homes for older people and maintains a supply of land to meet that target. Whilst we recognise that there is not a requirement in national policy for the Council to maintain a specific supply of accommodation for older people identifying the level of need and monitoring supply would aid decision makers in the application of this policy and ensuring needs are met over the plan period. Such an approach would also ensure effective monitoring in relation meeting the needs of

older people and encourage positive decision making if there is a deficiency in supply.

- support and encouragement for older persons accommodation on brownfield and other land in established urban and suburban environments and which is not allocated (i.e. windfall sites) given the level of need and that older people are most likely to prefer to continue to reside in established areas with which they are familiar.

Self-build

38. Rather than impose a requirement on sites to provide pots for self-builders we would suggest that the Council allocate their own land for such development work with landowners to identify sites that would be suitable for self-build. This is the approach advocated in Planning Practice Guidance and is most likely to meet secure the type of plot that self-builders would be seeking to purchase and ensure that self-building does not impact negatively on the delivery of other allocated sites.

Q4.7 Should the new Local Plan ensure that a proportion of new homes are one- or two-bedroom dwellings that are more affordable for first time buyers? In what circumstances should this be applied?

39. It is important to recognise that local assessments as to the type of housing needed are a snapshot in time. As such it cannot establish the different type of housing needed within specific areas of the Borough that will largely determine the type of development to be delivered. The Council should seek to aim for the broad mix of homes it requires across the borough, but it should not seek to specify a precise mix of what is required on all sites. The most effective way of achieving the broad mix of homes across the Borough, as mentioned in our comments on the growth options, will be through allocating a wide range of sites that will inevitably deliver a wide range of housing types and tenures. The HBF would therefore suggest that the policy does not set a specific mix to be delivered. We would recommend that the policy moving forward should instead require applicants to take account of the evidence set out in local assessments of housing need, alongside monitoring evidence as to the homes that have been delivered, when establishing the mix of homes to be provided on site.

Q4.8 Should the new Local Plan require all new homes to meet the nationally described space standard?

40. Whilst the HBF shares the Council's desire to see good quality homes delivered across Lewes we also consider that space standards can, in some instances, have a negative impact upon affordability issues and reduce customer choice. In terms of choice some developers will provide entry level two, three and four-bedroom properties which may not meet the optional nationally described space standards, but which would allow on lower incomes can afford a property which has their required number of bedrooms. Given the poor affordability of property in the area

and the tight constraints on development it is therefore important that the Council can provide robust evidence that there is a need to introduce the optional space standards – that these standards are a must have rather than a nice to have policy.

Q4.9 Should the Council be applying minimum density standards across the whole plan area, or only applying them in specific locations such as town centres, train stations, and routes with reliable and frequent bus services, e.g. A259?

41. The Council should ensure that any policy seeks to achieve appropriate development densities which will differ significantly depending on the location of development. Establishing minimum densities in specific sites or in town centre locations where specific consideration can be given to the appropriateness of any suggested densities would seem appropriate. However, to set a minimum density across the whole area would not provide the necessary flexibility to achieve appropriate densities as set out in the NPPF.

Deciding the Council's priorities for developer contributions

On what types of infrastructure should the Council prioritise developer contributions? Should the Council require:

a) A greater proportion of affordable housing but lower overall design and other infrastructure requirements; or

b) A lower proportion of affordable housing but higher overall design standards and other infrastructure requirements?

42. Whilst we recognise that the Council may wish to understand what is important to its community it must recognise that it must prioritise the delivery of the strategic infrastructure required to make development acceptable in planning terms. The Council must focus on delivering the infrastructure required to support new development as a priority and then consider the other policy costs and their impact on the viability of new development. Whilst this may require these other policy requirements to be reduced it is important that the delivery of the infrastructure required to support new development is not compromised.

Encouraging healthy communities

Q6.6 Should the 10–20-minute neighbourhood concept be adopted by the new Local Plan?

43. The principle behind the 10-to-20-minute neighbourhood is one that is a reasonable aspiration to take forward within the local plan, but the Council must remember that this should be seen as an aspiration within appropriate locations rather than a blunt tool for development management or site allocations across the Borough. For example, the Council note the application of this principal in more rural areas is inevitably more difficult as populations are generally too low to meet all the features of a 10-20-minute neighbourhood. However, this should not prevent development from happening in such locations where appropriate.

44. Firstly, there may be clusters of villages that provide a range of services for that area within reasonable travelling of each other. These areas might be able to sustainably support a substantial level of development but may not meet the principles of the 10-to-20-minute neighbourhood and as such development in such areas is not supported in the local plan. Secondly, the Council will need to recognise that settlements that currently do not have the services that are consistent with the 10-to-20-minute neighbourhood could expand to include those services if new development is allocated in those areas. The 10-to-20-minute neighbourhood should not be used as a basis for only locating development close to existing services rather identifying where services could be improved through new development. There is a real danger that the principle could be used negatively and become a way of preventing development in certain communities rather than promoting improved neighbourhoods.
45. Finally, the Council must also recognise that if it seeks to apply this principle there is a need for the Council to provide a strong leadership function for local public services to ensure that these are in place and are retained. The Council must ensure that they and their partners are able and willing to support this concept at larger strategic developments or where the Council is seeking to deliver higher density development. Without this strong co-ordinating role, the Council are unlikely to achieve their aspirations in relation to the 10-to-20-minute neighbourhood.

Broadband

46. The Council should not impose new electronic communications requirements beyond the provision of infrastructure as set out in statutory Building Regulations. The Government are committed to future legislation that will ensure all new build homes are built with gigabit-capable broadband². The Government will amend Part R: Physical Infrastructure for High-Speed Electronic Communications Networks of the Building Regulations 2010 (2016 edition) to place obligations on housing developers to work with network operators to install gigabit broadband, where this can be done within a commercial cost cap.
47. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has outlined its intentions on the practical workings of this policy, which will apply to all new builds. All new build developments will be equipped with the physical infrastructure to support gigabit-capable connections from more than one network operator and as such the Council does not need to include its own policies in the local plan in relation to broadband and residential development.

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-part-r-physical-infrastructure-for-electronic-communications-and-part-9a-of-the-building-regulations/review-of-part-r-physical-infrastructure-for-electronic-communications-and-part-9a-of-the-building-regulations>

Conclusion

48. We hope these representations are of assistance in taking the plan forward. Should you require any further clarification on the issues raised in our comments please contact me.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Behrendt'.

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