

## **Matter 8: Delivery**

- 1. With reference to NPPF paragraph 22 and [DSH09], what should the local plan timeframe be?**
  - 1.1. The NPPF<sup>1</sup> is clear that strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum of 15 years from adoption. The original end date of the plan in 2037, is not sufficient to meet this 15-year requirement and will need to be extended. DSH09 proposes to amend the plan period end in 2039, it suggests that this would be sufficient to meet the 15-year period assuming the Plan is adopted in 2024. However, DSH09 also proposes to move the start date of the Plan. The HBF considers that it is not necessary to move the start date of the Plan period. Therefore, the HBF considers that the Plan period should be at least 2021 to 2039.
  
- 2. In line with NPPF paragraphs 68 and 74, what should the five year housing land supply requirement ('5YHLSR') be on adoption? Are existing commitments at policy WS 1 evidenced and accurate?**
  - 2.1. The NPPF<sup>2</sup> states that planning policies should identify a supply of specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan period, with an appropriate buffer. The NPPF<sup>3</sup> and PPG also sets out how that five-year housing land supply should be calculated. It sets out that an LPA should be able to identify a specific deliverable supply against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, it also states that a buffer should be included, 5% to ensure choice and competition, or 10% where a LPA wishes to demonstrate a five year supply, or 20% where there have been significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years.
  - 2.2. The Local Plan sets a housing requirement of 13,360 net additional dwellings equivalent to 835 dwellings per annum (dpa). DSH09 sets a housing requirement of 13,600 dwellings over the period 2022/23 to 2038/39 equivalent to 800dpa. The HBF does not consider that either of these figures are appropriate and considers that there is a need to include an uplift to support economic development as set out in the Local Plan, but that it needs to be above that proposed. The HBF also considers that the high levels of affordable housing need also justify an uplift to the housing requirement. Therefore, the HBF considers that the housing requirement is above either of the figures proposed by the Council.
  - 2.3. The latest Housing Delivery Test (HDT) results for Wirral are from 2021 these identify a HDT score of 99%, this suggests that at this time the 20% buffer is not required. It is not clear if the Council wishes to demonstrate a five-year supply and therefore whether the 10% buffer would apply.
  - 2.4. The PPG<sup>4</sup> states that the level of deficit or shortfall will need to be calculated from the base date of the adopted plan and should be added to the plan requirements for the

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<sup>1</sup> NPPF 2021 Paragraph 22

<sup>2</sup> NPPF 2021 Paragraph 68

<sup>3</sup> NPPF 2021 Paragraph 74

<sup>4</sup> PPG ID: 68-031-20190722

Home Builders Federation (HBF) (ID: 1237833)  
response to the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions for the  
Examination of the Wirral Local Plan

next 5-year period (the Sedgefield approach), then the appropriate buffer should be applied. The DLUHC Live Tables on Housing Supply<sup>5</sup> identify that Wirral have provided 629 dwellings in 2021/22, this differs slightly to the Wirral Monitoring Report which suggests 631 dwellings.

2.5. The HBF does not wish to comment on individual sites however, in line with the NPPF<sup>6</sup> the HBF would expect the Council to be able to evidence the deliverability of the sites included within the five-year supply, including the commitments identified in WS1.

**3. 'Allowances', as in table 3.2 of the Local Plan comprise 'conversions', 'windfalls' and returning empty/ vacant homes to use, collectively V~ amounting to anticipated supply of 3,490 over the plan period. Are all distinct categories, and is that clearly evidenced?**

3.1. As set out in our response to question 5 of Matter 3, the HBF would generally recommend that these allowances are not included in the supply and instead form part of the flexibility in supply. However, if the Council intends to include any allowances the HBF would expect the Council to be able to evidence all of the supply provided from 'allowances' including those from conversions and changes of use, new build windfalls and the return to use of empty homes.

**4. Are 'allowances' distinct from 'other developable areas' via which provision of 3,655 dwellings is anticipated? Where are the geographic parameters for other developable areas set out, noting that they are stated to be within masterplan areas alone? Is there a robust methodology in respect of the calculation of anticipated delivery from other developable areas? How does a windfall allowance and provision anticipated from other developable areas interact?**

4.1. The HBF would expect the Council to ensure that they are not double counting and ensure that the 'other developable areas' and 'allowances' are not both counting the same developments within the supply. The Housing Delivery Strategy footnote 6 suggests that the potential for development to come forward in the Regeneration Areas has been taken into account by excluding them from the windfall allowance. However, it is not as clear how any potential overlap between the other allowances (empty homes, conversions, change of use) have been taken in to consideration. The HBF would expect the Council to ensure that they have evidence to support all sources of supply and ensure that there is no overlap in this evidence either.

4.2. The HBF would expect the Council to ensure that there is a robust methodology for the calculation of anticipated delivery from the 'other developable areas'. The HBF would also assume that the Council have ensured that they are developable in line with the NPPF<sup>7</sup> definition, and that they are in a suitable location for housing development with a reasonable prospect that they will be available and could be viably developed at the point envisaged. It is noted that the Council's Response to Additional Documents AD01-AD06: AD05 Housing Supply and AD02: Other Developable Areas identify that

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<sup>5</sup> Table 122: Housing Supply; net additional dwellings, by local authority  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-net-supply-of-housing>

<sup>6</sup> NPPF 2021 paragraph 68, 74 and glossary.

<sup>7</sup> NPPF 2021 glossary

the 'other developable areas' are 'broad locations' rather than specific, developable sites. There is no definition of 'broad locations' within the NPPF, however, the PPG in relation to housing and economic land availability assessment uses sites / broad locations interchangeably in terms of its guidance including in terms of what can be considered when assessing whether sites / broad locations are likely to be developed.

- 4.3. It is noted that the Council's response to AD02: Other Developable Areas highlights other examples of Broad Locations with in Plans and identifies Fareham as a recent example. However, it is noted here that the Inspector's Report<sup>8</sup> does highlight evidence of availability, suitability and economic viability, and the 77% ownership of the land by the Council and that other land is in public ownership and that discussions have been held with the owners, and the soft market testing that has been undertaken, before concluding that there is a reasonable prospect of 620 dwellings (of the 1,650 identified in the Position Statement) being achieved. It is not apparent that each of the 'other developable areas' within Wirral is supported by a similar base of evidence. The Council's Response also refers to the Lancaster Local Plan, although here the HBF would note that this broad location is very different in that the majority of housing is planned on a greenfield, and the Plan includes a Local Plan Review Mechanism which clearly states that the Council is obliged to review the Local Plan within five years and an earlier review will be undertaken in the event that the rate of delivery or the overall capacity of Bailrigg Garden Village (South Lancashire Broad Location) is well below that which is anticipated at the time of the Local Plan adoption. The HBF also notes that in the case of the Havant Local Plan<sup>9</sup> for example the Inspector<sup>10</sup> had concerns in relation to the broad locations covering Havant Town Centre and Waterloo Town Centre due to the need for Compulsory Purchase, the need to relocate existing uses and insufficient evidence and sought to significantly reduce the housing supply expected from these areas.
- 4.4. Therefore, the Council will need to ensure that they have sufficient evidence to confirm developability in these 'other developable areas' as proposed, and to show that these housing numbers do not overlap with other allowances and evidence to support these allowances.
- 5. Are future delivery forecasts supported by robust evidence? When should any windfall allowance start contributing towards delivery? Given 11 of 66 settlement area allocations in appendix 18 to the Local Plan are for single dwellings, are windfall expectations justified?**
- 5.1. The HBF would expect the future delivery forecasts to be supported by robust evidence, in line with the NPPF and the PPG<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Fareham Local Plan Inspectors Report (March 2023)  
[https://www.fareham.gov.uk/pdf/planning/local\\_plan/FarehamLP-InspectorsReport-FINALv2merged.pdf](https://www.fareham.gov.uk/pdf/planning/local_plan/FarehamLP-InspectorsReport-FINALv2merged.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Since withdrawn.

<sup>10</sup> Havant Local Plan Inspector's Interim Finding Report (2021)  
(<https://cdn.havant.gov.uk/public/documents/CR18%20The%20Inspector's%20Interim%20Findings%20Report.pdf>)

<sup>11</sup> PPG ID: 68-007-20190722 and ID: 68-020-20190722

- 5.2. The Local plan includes a windfall development of 30dwellings per annum (dpa), the HBF considers that any windfall allowance should only be included if compelling evidence is provided in line with the NPPF<sup>12</sup>, and that it will not lead to double counting. The HBF recommends that any windfall, change of use or conversion allowance is not included within the first three years of the Plan, as it is likely that that would lead to double counting with existing permissions. Where small scale allocations are also included within the supply, the HBF would also expect these to have been taken in to consideration in terms of the windfall allowance identified.
- 5.3. The Housing Delivery Strategy states that past trends show an annual average of 49 dwellings have come forward on previously un-identified sites since 2008, with annual averages of 58dpa and 49dpa over the last five and ten years. It also states that for purposes of the Local Plan Submission Draft, it also excludes sites within the identified Regeneration Areas. The Strategy is much less clear on how other elements of double counting have been avoided or how future trends have been considered.
- 6. Why are some allocations included which were not identified via the 2019 SHLAA? Is it justified that the plan contains allocations as small as a single dwelling (11 allocations in that respect under Local Plan Appendix 18)?**
- 6.1. The HBF considers this is a question for the Council.

***NB, we will likely return to questions 7 to 9 after matter 9 area-based policies.***

**7. Has C2 provision been accounted for effectively?**

- 7.1. The Local Plan<sup>13</sup> states that analysis of changes to the population suggests a need for an additional 1,149 residential care places and 2,332 units of specialist older person dwellings such as sheltered and extra care homes by 2037. It is noted that one of the allocations<sup>14</sup> includes reference to C2, this appears to be the only identified site. Policy WS3.6 Part M relates to Specialist Housing and supports its provision where it meets a number of criteria, however, this will not directly address the need identified if suitable sites are not available.

**8. Are anticipated delivery trajectories in respect of housing and employment robust?**

- 8.1. The HBF is concerned that without appropriate evidence it is not possible to determine if the anticipated delivery trajectories in relation to housing are robust. The HBF is concerned that the Council has not provided sufficient evidence in relation to their future supply, allowances for windfalls, empty homes, conversions and changes of use, or in support of the 'other developable areas', and to ensure that there is not any double counting within the supply.

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<sup>12</sup> NPPF 2021 paragraph 71

<sup>13</sup> Wirral Local Plan Regulation 19 paragraph 3.45

<sup>14</sup> RES-RA6.7

- 8.2. The HBF notes that the Wirral Empty Homes Task 2 Report highlights that double counting has occurred in historic data and that there remains a potential risk for double counting to occur in future.
- 8.3. The HBF does not wish to comment upon the acceptability or otherwise of individual sites. However, the HBF considers it is important that all the sites contained within the plan are deliverable over the plan period, with an appropriate trajectory. The HBF would expect the Council to have the evidence to support the proposed delivery of these sites.
- 9. On adoption will the Council be able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply of deliverable sites, and a supply of developable sites for years 6-10?**
- 9.1. The HBF would expect the Council to ensure that it can demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable sites, and to have the appropriate evidence to ensure that this is robust and transparent. The HBF has not scrutinised the housing land supply in detail, as we do not wish to comment on the acceptability or otherwise of individual sites, and so is not in a position to comment as to whether the Local Plan would provide a five-year supply on adoption, or whether it would have a developable supply of sites for years 6-10.
- 10. What is the extent of any viability 'gap' in terms of different typologies? Will likely availability of public sector funding be sufficient to address any viability gap?**
- 10.1. The HBF considers that this is a question for the Council, however, the HBF would expect to see evidence of the certainty of public sector funding if this is to be used to demonstrate the viability of development and therefore the deliverability of the Plan.
- 11. WBC031 refers to a 30% buffer in sites, and to accelerated delivery later in the plan period. Paragraph ES 40 further sets out that the Local Plan is 'dependent upon the successful implementation of significant and ambitious regeneration strategies for Birkenhead and the 'Left Bank''. Can we be confident that delivery of regeneration strategies, including the density of development envisaged, will come forward to enable the overarching plan strategy?**
- 11.1. The HBF notes that paragraph ES40 also goes on to state that *'the viability and delivery of the scale of regeneration anticipated by the Local plan is undoubtedly challenging and ambitious in light of local market conditions and viability considerations'*. The HBF is concerned that proposed regeneration strategies are challenging and ambitious and not realistic. The Aspinall Verdi report goes on to consider the assumptions they have made that allow them to consider the Plan realistic. However, the HBF has concerns in relation to some of these assumptions including the supply of sites, the continuation of funding opportunities, and the assumption that development will occur in other areas within Wirral just because they have chosen not to review their Green Belt. The HBF is concerned that the regeneration strategies, including the density of development envisioned will not come forward and the overarching strategy of the Plan will not be delivered.

**12. A significant area of disagreement between the Council and Development Consortium appears to be over build costs (WBC031, table at page 40). Are anticipated build costs advanced by the Council justified?**

12.1. The HBF considers that this is a question for the Council.

**13. As a whole, will the Local Plan deliver the total quantum of housing and employment land envisaged over its lifespan?**

13.1. The HBF has concerns that the Plan will not deliver the total quantum of housing that is envisaged by the Plan.