

Sent by email to: localplan@uttlesford.gov.uk

14/10/2024

Dear Sir/ Madam

Uttlesford Local Plan

1. Thank you for consulting the Home Builders Federation (HBF) on the Uttlesford 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.

Consultation on amendments to the NPPF

2. At the end of July, the Government commenced a consultation on a number of amendments to the NPPF. The proposed revisions will make significant changes to the current document and there is a strong possibility that many of Uttlesford District Council (UDC), will be required to prepare plans that are consistent with the changes being proposed, should they be adopted. Alongside the changes to the NPPF the Government have consulted on a new standard method. While our comments will be based on the current NPPF we will refer to the potential impact of the proposed changes within our representations.
3. HBF are concerned that Councils such as UDC will, in the face of increases in its housing needs, seek to move quickly to submission in order to avoid considering the impacts arising from the proposed changes to national policy. Whilst it is for the council to decide on the timescale for the submission of its local plan this cannot be at the expense of the documentation and the evidence required on the submission of a local plan. For example, the council will need to ensure that it has taken into account the impact of any changes

resulting from the NPPF in neighbouring areas as part of its duty to co-operate. The Council will be aware that this work must be done prior to submission for the council to show that they have fulfilled their duty to co-operate a point we discuss in more detail below. While the proposed amendments can only be given limited weight with regard to the local plan at this point in time it is important to note that inspectors are already asking local plans to provide statements on the new NPPF and the Written Ministerial Statement '*Building the Homes we Need*' and it will be necessary for UDC to consider the implications of the changes with regard to this local plan.

Core policy 2 meeting our housing needs

Housing requirement

4. This policy establishes the Council's housing requirement for the district as 13,500 homes, 675 dwellings per annum, and reflects the capped local housing needs assessment arrived at using the standard method. Without the cap the level of need is 727 dpa, not too far below the 750 dpa that arrived it using the standard method that was recently consulted on by MHCLG and HBF would suggest consideration is given by the council as to whether additional supply could be identified to meet this requirement arrived at using the new standard method, should it be adopted.

5. HBF would agree with the council that this is the starting point for considering the minimum number of homes that must be delivered by the Council. However, the Council will need to consider whether there are any unmet needs arising in neighbouring areas, taking into account the proposed changes to the NPPF. While Uttlesford's assessment of housing need sees a slight increase of 74 dwellings per annum the change in its neighbouring authorities is more significant, as set out in table 1 below, ranging from 117 dpa to 493 dpa.

Table1: Change in LHNA between current and proposed standard method

LPA	Current Method	Proposed Method	Change
South Cambridgeshire	1,039	1,156	117
Basildon	1,039	1,291	252
Braintree	813	1,098	285
Brentwood	511	691	180
Chelmsford	913	1,406	493
Epping Forest	725	1,210	485
East Hertfordshire	1,041	1,173	132
Uttlesford	675	749	74

6. These changes are significant and UDC will need to engage with its neighbours to understand as part of its duty to co-operate whether these will result in unmet needs in those authorities and if it does the degree to which UDC could support those authorities to meet their housing needs.

Housing supply

7. In order to meet the minimum housing requirement, the council outline in Table 4.2 that they have identified sites that will deliver 14,741 homes over the plan period. The majority of the development, 8,614 homes, is expected to come from completions between 2021-2024 and existing commitments with the remaining from allocations and windfall development and results in a buffer between housing needs and supply of 1,241 homes – around 9%. HBF considers a buffer to be an essential part of plan making in order to ensure that a plan is deliverable across its plan period, as required by paragraph 35c of the NPPF. There are no hard and fast rules as to how large a buffer is required to ensure the needs are met in full, with HBF suggesting that between 10% and 20% provides the necessary flexibility in supply to take account of unforeseen delays in the delivery of key sites. Where there is a reliance on a few strategic sites to meet needs and these deliver later the plan period we generally suggest that the buffer should be above 15% given that large strategic sites are more susceptible to delays and slow delivery due to their complexity and reliance on major infrastructure improvements.

Five year land supply

8. Based on Appendix 2 of the Uttlesford Housing Trajectory, HBF are concerned that the Council may not have five years of housing land supply on adoption of the plan. In considering the five year land supply on adoption it will be necessary to take account of the proposed changes to national policy which will reintroduce the 5% buffer for all areas and the 20% buffer for those areas where there has been a significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years, based on the Housing Delivery Test (HDT). The latest HDT for Uttlesford shows that they are currently delivering less than 85% of the required homes and as such are required to have a 20% buffer between needs and supply when considering the five year housing land supply. If this were the case on adoption in 2025/26 then the Council would have a 4.27 year housing land supply.

9. However, based on the expected trajectory it would appear that the point of adoption the Council's HDT will be above the 85% meaning that the Council would need to include the 5% buffer in its five year housing land supply. This lower buffer though would still result in the Council not having a five year land supply on adoption. Our assessment is set out in appendix 1 and shows that on adoption in 2025/26 the Council would have a 4.88 years of housing land supply. Whilst not substantially lower than five years it does indicate that land supply in the early years of the plan is relatively weak and that changes in delivery expectations on any sites in the first half of the plan period would almost certainly mean the plan being considered out of date.
10. In order to address this issue HBF would suggest that additional allocations of small and medium sized site are needed to provide improved delivery in the first five years of the plan and ensure that the plan does not become out of date as soon as it is adopted. In particular we would suggest that rather than waiting for allocations to come forward through neighbourhood plans as is suggested in in CP19 that the Council allocates sites in larger villages itself. This would ensure that much needed homes in these locations are not unnecessarily delayed and would bolster the Council's five year land supply as such sites are likely to come forward quickly rather than expecting them to come forward in the second half of the plan period.

10% small sites

11. In addition to bolstering the five year land supply the allocation of smaller sites in larger villages would also have the potential to increase the supply of small sites – a particular aim of the NPPF as articulated in paragraph 70. As the council will be aware the NPPF sets out a paragraph 70a that the Council must identify through the development plan and brownfield register land to accommodate at least 10% of their housing requirement. However, HBF could not find any evidence to show that this requirement of national policy had been met, and if it has not been met why not. In meeting this requirement, the Council will need to ensure that these are identified with as an allocation in the local plan or in the Brownfield Register and does not consider small site windfalls as contributing to the 10% requirement.
12. Whilst it will be important to promote more small sites to come forward over the plan period as windfall, as mentioned in part d of paragraph 70 of the NPPF, this is distinct from the 10% requirement set out in part a of paragraph 70 of the NPPF. Further clarification that the

10% should not include windfall development is in the glossary where windfall is defined as “Sites not specifically identified in the development plan”. (our emphasis)

13. It is important to recognise that the allocation of small sites is a priority and stems from the need to support small house builders by ensuring that they benefit from having their sites identified for development either through the local plan or brownfield register. The effect of an allocation is to take some of the risk out of that development and provide greater certainty that those sites come forward. This in turn will allow the SME sector to grow, deliver homes that will increase the diversity of the new homes that are available as well as bring those homes forward earlier in the plan period.
14. The Council should also recognise that allocating small sites and supporting SME house builders not only ensures a stronger supply in the short term but also improves the diversity of choice within local housing markets, support local and regional supply chains and are often pivotal in bring forward innovation and supporting jobs growth locally, with 1 in 5 of the SME work force comprising of apprentices. A failure to allocate small sites will contribute to the continued decline in small and medium sized house builders. Recent research by the HBF has found that there are 85% fewer small house builders today than there was 20 years ago and that of a survey of SME house builders 93% said that planning was a major barrier to SME growth. Whilst this decline is due to a range of factors more allocations of small sites would ease the burden on many SME developers and provide more certainty that their scheme will be permitted, allowing them to secure the necessary finance that is often unavailable to SMEs until permission is granted.
15. Therefore, in order for the plan to be consistent with national policy the Council should not just seek to maximise delivery from the small sites that do come forward but to actively promote these through allocations in the local plan.

Core Policy 22 Net Zero Operational Carbon

The policy is unsound as it is inconsistent with national policy

16. The proposed policy position would require all new development to fossil fuel free and demonstrate net zero operational carbon onsite by ensuring energy use standard for all new dwellings of 35kwh/m²/year and space heating demand of less than 15 kwh/m²/year (20 kwh/m²/year for bungalows). This would be demonstrated through an Energy Assessment,

which for major applications must be a full energy strategy utilising accurate methods for operational energy use prediction, such as Passivhaus Planning Package (PHPP) or CIBSE TM54.

17. Whilst the HBF would agree with the Council that there is a need to act to reduce carbon emissions we would disagree that this needs to be undertaken through the local plan given that there is already a national approach, the Future Homes Standard (FHS), being taken forward to achieve the same goal. Delivering these improvements through building regulations has a distinct advantage over delivering a variety of different approaches across the county, in that it provides a single approach that all developers understand and can be rolled out at scale. This allows supply chains and skills to be improved prior to implementation and ensure that improvements to building standards are actually deliverable from the point at which they are introduced.
18. However, if the Council chooses to go beyond current or future standards it must be done in a way that is consistent with national policy and robustly assesses its consequences and gives consideration as to how the requirements are consistent with the written ministerial statement (WMS) published on the 13th of December 2023. Before considering the content of the WMS itself it is important to note the High Court judgement from the 2nd of July 2024 ([2024] EWHC 1693 Admin). This judgement was on the challenge to the WMS made by Rights Community Action on three grounds, including that the WMS restricted exercise by local authorities of powers conferred on them.
19. The judgment made by Justice Lieven was that the claim failed on all three grounds. In coming to these judgements Justice Lieven importantly notes the intention of the Government at the time with respect to section 1(1)c of the Planning and Energy Act 2008, which allowed Local Authorities to set standards above those in building regulations. Paragraph 65 states:

“With respect to the current section 1(1)(c) specifically, the Minister confirmed councils “can go further and faster than building regulations, but within the national framework”. The Minister also addressed the overall intention of clause 1(2) in the following terms:

“The intention was for local authorities, in setting energy efficiency standards, to choose only those standards that have been set out or referred to in regulations made by the Secretary of State, or which are set out or endorsed in

national policies or guidance issued by the Secretary of State. That approach was taken with a view to avoiding the fragmentation of building standards, which could lead to different standards applying in different areas of the country. Although supportive of the hon. Gentleman's Bill, that was not an outcome that we wanted to achieve.”

20. It is therefore clear that the intention of the original legislation was to ensure that energy efficiency standards within local plans were to be set within the scope of building regulations to avoid a multiplicity of standards coming forward. The judgment goes on to note in paragraph 66 that the WMS does not stray from this purpose.
21. It is also evident that not only is the WMS compliant with legislation but also in line with the intention of Planning and Environment Act 2008 which was to ensure that any policies seeking improved standards on those set out in Building Regulations must be set within the framework of those regulations. Local plan policies which seek to apply an alternative standard would not only be inconsistent with the WMS but also with the intentions of the legislation allowing local authorities to set lower standards.
22. Moving to the WMS itself, the housing minister notes that “*Compared to varied local standards nationally applied standards provide much-needed clarity and consistency for businesses, large and small, to invest and prepare to build net-zero ready homes*” and that local standards can “add further costs to building new homes by adding complexity and undermining economies of scale”. After noting these concerns, the 2023 WMS goes on to state that any standard that goes beyond building regulations should be rejected at examination if the LPA does not have a well-reasoned and robustly costed rationale that ensures:
 - That development remains viable, and the impact on housing supply and affordability is considered in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.
 - The additional requirement is expressed as a percentage uplift of a dwelling's Target Emissions Rate (TER) calculated using a specified version of the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP).
23. HBF do not consider the approach set out in Core Policy 22 to be consistent with the WMS nor that the implications of such a policy have been properly assessed in the supporting evidence base. Our detailed points are set out below.

24. The approach proposed by the Council based on energy use is inconsistent with the approach set out in the WMS and as such is unsound. It should be noted that the Government have considered whether it was appropriate to use a delivered energy metric such as the one being proposed in the policy position paper and have concluded that these do not offer any additional benefits to those being taken forward by Government. Therefore, if the Council are to require standards above those set out in building regulations they must be expressed as a percentage of the target emission rate and not as an energy use target in order to avoid fragmentation of the standards with different requirements being set in different areas which it must be recognised was not only an expectation of the WMS but also of the legislation that permits council to adopt higher standards in local plan in the first place. As such the HBF do not consider the council to be justified in departing from either the WMS or the Planning and Energy Act (2008) and consider it necessary the energy use requirements to be deleted from this policy.
25. While HBF do not consider the policy to be consistent with national policy we are also concerned that the Council has not properly considered the impact on viability or the deliverability of development. The Council will need to ensure the costs and deliverability of this policy are fully and robustly tested. In preparing its viability assessment HBF suggest the Council consider costs published by the Future Homes Hub (FHH) as part of their work to support and inform the implementation of the Future Homes Standard. The costs for similar standards to those being proposed can be found in the FHH report '*Ready for Zero*'. This study tests a number of archetypes against a range of specifications from the current standards set out in the 2021 Building Regulations through to standards that will achieve similar standards to those proposed by the Council.
26. The various specifications and costs considered are summarised in Figure 8 of '*Ready for Zero*' and indicates that in order to deliver standards above the FHS on a three bed roomed end of terrace house (specifications CS3, CS4 and CS5 in the FHH report) would be around 15-19% higher than the 2021 Building Regs, around £17,000 to £22,000 more per unit. The council's Stage Viability Assessment at paragraph 2.13.3 suggests the costs of achieving its proposed policy to be 5% above current regulations. HBF recognise that the specifications are not direct comparison, but it does give an indication as to the potential cost and that the 5% increase in built cost proposed by the Council appears low. Given that there is still significant uncertainty as to the cost of delivering the standards being proposed

the Council will need ensure that further sensitivity testing is undertaken in the viability study.

27. With regard to deliverability of zero carbon homes HBF would not disagree that the proposed standards are technically feasible. However, HBF are concerned as to the impact these requirements will have on the rates at which sites can deliver new homes on all types of sites. Given that the standards proposed are higher than those proposed in the Future Homes Standard and will require higher levels of fabric efficiency, which in turn will require new skills and materials that may not be readily available, HBF are concerned this could slow delivery in the short to medium term as supply chains are developed.
28. It has been recognised by the FHH that to deliver higher standards will require phased transitional arrangements to enable a steady build-up of skills and ensure quality. The FHH also notes in its report Ready for Zero that even if a short transition period between current standards and those similar to the Council are proposing that this would “... *create a high risk of quality problems, inflated costs and, potentially, stalled build programmes.*” However, HBF could find no evidence that the Council has considered whether its proposed standard will impact on the rate at which new homes can be built. The Council will need to speak directly to a range of housebuilders operating in Uttlesford to understand the impact of its policy on the rate at which homes will be delivered on its allocated sites. Without any consideration of delivery then the Council’s decision to go beyond what is required by building regulations is clearly unjustified
29. While HBF understands the desire for LPAs to go further current policy recognises that even where development can viably implement higher standards this must be within a consistent technical framework and approach to assessing building performance against those technical standards. Indeed, this has long been the case in planning policy with paragraph 159b of the NPPF stating that “*Any local requirements for the sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government’s policy for national technical standards*”.
30. If the Council have the evidence to show that the policy is deliverable the Council will need to ensure that all other policies in the local plan are consistent with delivering the levels of embodied carbon being proposed. The most energy efficient design will inevitably lead to less variety in the built form in order to reduce the surface area of the building. This will need to be reflected in design policies and any design codes that are produced to ensure

that development is not refused for seeking to meet energy efficiency standards but, for example, not being designed in the character of the local area.

31. HBF would also recommend that that if a net zero policy is to be included in the local plan it should require a development to be net zero rather than for individual homes. As the council will be aware some homes, such as terrace houses and flats, are more intrinsically energy efficient and emit less carbon compared to detached homes and bungalows. As such it may be difficult for some individual homes to be net zero but where there is a mix of development the site as a whole to achieve the required standard.

Core Policy 24 Embodied Carbon

The policy is unsound as it is inconsistent with national policy.

32. HBF do not consider this requirement to be consistent with national policy. The Planning and Energy Act 2008 permits council to set energy efficiency standards to exceed to set out in building regulations, but it does not state that LPAs can set specific standards with regard to the embodied carbon in new buildings. Nor is it included as one of the optional technical standards set out in PPG that local authorities can choose to implement where there is supporting evidence. This is a new technical standard, and such standard should not be established on an ad-hoc basis through local plans. In addition, HBF is concerned that the requirement to undertake an accurate whole life carbon assessment is compromised by the lack of data across building material as to their embodied carbon. Until there is greater accuracy, we question whether the whole life carbon assessments can be sufficiently robust at present to be part of decision making.

33. As with reducing carbon emissions from operational energy use HBF considers it best that such matters addressed at a national level to avoid different approaches and standard being set in different areas. The housebuilding industry is working with the Future Homes Hub it to develop a roadmap to reducing embodied carbon and whilst Council's may want to go further faster HBF have concerns that this will impact on the deliverability of development with a disproportionate impact on SME developers.

34. Therefore, HBF consider the policy to be unsound and it should be deleted.

Core Policy 34 Water Supply and Protection of Water Resources

Policy is unsound as it is inconsistent with national policy.

35. The lower water standard of 90 l/p/d is not consistent with national policy which states that 110 l/p/d is sufficient in water stressed areas. Future water standards are being considered that will phase the introduction of lower standards and the council should not look to introduce lower standards ahead of these recognising that a consistent national approach is the best way of ensuring improved standards whilst maintaining the delivery of new homes.
36. HBF also consider the final paragraph stating that "*Planning proposals which increase the demand for off-site water and sewage service infrastructure will only be granted permission where it can be demonstrated that sufficient infrastructure capacity*" to be unsound.
37. Policies in local plans relating to applicants having to assess the water supply and wastewater services are unnecessary and unlawful because they are an attempt to get applicants to do things for which they are not legally responsible. Instead, it is the responsibility of water companies, working with local authorities and the Environment Agency, to plan for the future demand for water services relating to the development requirements proposed in local plans, not applicants.
38. If the water company is unable to supply water to meet expected levels of development, this must be disclosed in the WRMP. If unforeseen events occur after the WRMP is adopted, meaning that the water company is now unable to provide the water services required, then the local authority must reflect those problems in its local plan. HBF recognises that this could represent a significant barrier to the delivery of the local plan. It might even mean that the development requirements cannot be delivered, either in part or in their entirety.
39. If water services cannot be guaranteed, then the development requirements in the local plan cannot be delivered. Consequently, the local plan is unsound. The plan cannot be made sound in relation to matters of water through policies in that plan stipulating actions that applicants must take as they cannot provide the water services.
40. Housebuilders cannot resolve the problems relating to water services through policy measures or conditions. Water companies, local authorities the Environment Agency cannot ignore their statutory responsibilities in terms of planning for water by deflecting this onto

housebuilders. Therefore, the final paragraph of this policy should be deleted as it is not consistent with the legal framework governing the supply of water and wastewater service to new development.

Core Policy 40 Biodiversity and Nature Recovery

The policy is unsound as it is unjustified.

41. The HBF consider the requirement for new development to deliver a 20% net gain to be unjustified. The latest guidance published by Government on the 14th of February and highlight the statement that:

“... plan-makers should not seek a higher percentage than the statutory objective of 10% biodiversity net gain, either on an area-wide basis or for specific allocations for development unless justified. To justify such policies, they will need to be evidenced including as to local need for a higher percentage, local opportunities for a higher percentage and any impacts on viability for development. Consideration will also need to be given to how the policy will be implemented”.

42. It is important to note that the starting point is that local plan should not seek a higher requirement. This is different to a permissive policy allowing local plans to seek a higher level of BNG where justified, and the HBF would argue that it should be considered a high bar with regard to the evidence required to justify such a policy. There must be very robust evidence that the area is significantly worse than the country as whole with regard to the negative impacts on biodiversity from development and that the viability evidence has considered in detail the actual costs facing development rather than assumed costs based generalised national data.

43. The HBF does not disagree with the broad thrust that the UK has seen a significant loss in biodiversity not just in recent past but previous centuries and as such recognise the importance of ensuring that the outcome of new development in future is that there is a net gain in biodiversity. However, it is important to recognise that in recent years new residential development has not been the driver of declining biodiversity either locally or nationally and in particular over the last 50 years. The main drivers of declining biodiversity in England, as outlined in the State of Nature Report 2023 (State of Nature Partnership, 2023), as being

“Intensive management of agricultural land, largely driven by policies and incentives since World War II, has been identified as the most significant factor driving species’ population change in the UK”. Therefore, whilst it is important for development to ensure that it improves the natural environment the main driver of biodiversity it is important to also recognise it is not currently a significant driver of biodiversity decline in Uttlesford.

44. Given that the Government has stated that plan makers should not seek to apply a higher level of BNG it is clearly insufficient to simply state that a 20% BNG requirement is needed in UDC without the evidence to show why development is having a greater impact on biodiversity in Uttlesford compared to other parts of the country. The Council point in the local plan to environmental degradation through modern farming and loss grass verges and hedgerows but that does not point to new development having a greater impact on a decline in biodiversity and a such should deliver more than 10% net gain. The Council is in effect seeking to require new development to offset the impacts of biodiversity created by the practices of others in the past.
45. With regard to viability the Council’s Viability Assessment (VA) states in paragraph 4.34 uses the Government 2019 Impact Assessment (IA). Whilst in the absence of other costs these have been used across the country for assessing viability). However, it must be noted that the IA is an examination of the broad costs to the development industry based on a range of assumptions that will not necessarily reflect the type and location of development coming forward in Wealden and the costs of delivering BNG. In addition, the cost of creating and maintaining one hectare of habitat on site is based on 2017 study by Natural Trust, RSPB, and the Wildlife Trust in relation to farms and not residential development. In particular the on site management costs may well be higher compared to the study and the Council will need to provide evidence to what these costs are rather than rely on those set out in the IA.
46. Furthermore, the IA makes no consideration as to the potential reduction in the developable area in order to deliver at least 50% of net gains on site. This is the assumption made in the central estimate and which used in the Council’s VA. In some cases, this may have limited impact whereas on some sites it will impact significantly on the number of homes delivered. These assumptions will need to be tested with regard to allocated sites to understand the degree to which BNG can be delivered on site whilst still delivering expected levels of development.

47. Finally in using the cost estimate in the IA the Council are underestimating the cost of offsite delivery to meet net gains. The IA applies a cost of £11,000 per offsite credit. This much lower than current prices in the market which are in the region of £30,000 to £50,000 per offsite credit. These costs could also be higher still if there are insufficient credits locally. If credits are bought elsewhere then the spatial risk multiplier in the BNG Metric will increase the number of credits that are required. It will therefore be necessary for the Council to set out whether there will be sufficient credits to deliver net gains offsite within Uttlesford. If not, then the costs in the VA will need to be increased. It should also be noted that a 20% BNG requirement may require more offsite delivery if a developer is to maintain viable levels of housing delivery on site. This will mean that it is likely that more than 50% of the BNG in UDC will be delivered off site potentially increasing the price per unit.
48. If it is considered sound to maintain the 20% requirement the policy must recognise that the whilst the statutory 10% is fixed the additional 10% can be reduced where this impacts on the viability of development. Given the concerns raised above with regard to the difficulties of assessing the cost of BNG and a Local Plan Viability Assessment the Council must be clear that it will reduce the 20% to the statutory minimum in order to support the delivery of new development. Paragraph 58 of the NPPF recognises that there will be circumstances where development cannot meet all the policy costs placed on it by the local plan and that negotiation may be necessary in order to ensure a development can come forward. As such we would suggest the following sentence is included in Core Policy 22: "Where it is shown that 20% is not viable the development will revert to providing the statutory minimum."

Core Policy 53 Standards for New Residential Development

The policy is unsound as it is not consistent with national policy.

49. HBF would suggest that the second paragraph is amended to state that the housing mix should take account of the most up to date LHNA given that it is not a development plan document and cannot be given the status of policy. We would also suggest that the policy be amended to state that where there is robust evidence to show there is a need for an alternative mix in that location then this will be supported by the council.

Core Policy 55 Residential Space Standards

The policy is unsound as it is unjustified.

50. HBF could not find the Council's evidence showing that Nationally Described Space Standards to are required in UDC. The NPPF states at footnote 52 that "policies may also make use of the nationally described space standard, where the need for an internal space standard can be justified". As required by PPG this will need to include both evidence of need as well as the impact of space standards on viability and the affordability of new homes in UDC. While HBF and our members support the delivery of well-designed homes we also recognise that this can be achieved in a home built below space standards and that such homes can meet the needs of many households with regard to both cost and the number of rooms required.

Core Policy 56 Affordable Dwellings

Policy is unsound as it is unjustified.

51. The policy proposes an affordable housing requirement on all major development of 35%. As set out elsewhere in this representation HBF have some concerns as to the inputs into the viability assessment relation to Core Policy 22 and Core Policy 40. HBF consider it necessary for these costs to be revisited through the viability assessment to ensure this policy is deliverable. In addition, the policy should also be amended to reflect the evidence presented to the council that PDL sites cannot deliver 35% affordable housing. It is important that LPAs seek to maximise the delivery of development on PDL, and policies should provide a clear signal to the development industry that the Council is supportive these sites. As such we would suggest the council amend the policy and reduce the affordable housing requirements in relation to PDL given that the Viability Assessment suggests at paragraph 3.6.17 that a 20-30% requirement on PDL is warranted.

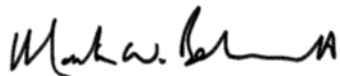
Formatting and presentation

52. Whilst this issue is not a matter of soundness it is important that those using the plan can reference policies effectively. The regulation 19 local plan being consulted on has no paragraph/ section numbers in the supporting text This may seem like a minor matter however ease of use is crucial to a local plan being effective for all and the council should ensure consistent paragraph numbering in the local plan prior to its submission.

Conclusion

53. At present we do not consider the plan to be sound, as measured against the tests of soundness set out in the NPPF. I can therefore confirm that the HBF would like to participate in any hearing sessions held at the examination in public on the matters raised in our representations and that we would like to be kept informed of the submission and examination of the local plan.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Behrendt', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Behrendt MRTPI
Planning Manager – Local Plans
Home Builders Federation
Email: mark.behrendt@hbf.co.uk
Tel: 07867415547

Appendix 1: Rolling Five year land supply assessment UDC.

	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33	33/34	34/35	35/36	36/37	37/38	38/39	39/40	40/41
Req.	675	675	675	675	675	675	675	675	675	675	675	675	675	675	675	675	675	675	675	675
Cumulative Req.	675	1350	2025	2700	3375	4050	4725	5400	6075	6750	7425	8100	8775	9450	10125	10800	11475	12150	12825	13500
Delivery	234	740	828	534	596	795	755	655	1029	1118	1062	929	899	847	789	659	648	616	548	460
Cumulative Delivery	234	974	1802	2336	2932	3727	4482	5137	6166	7284	8346	9275	10174	11021	11810	12469	13117	13733	14281	14741
Surplus/deficit	-441	-376	-223	-364	-443	-323	-243	-263	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5-yr req.	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375				
Add deficit	3375	3816	3751	3598	3739	3818	3698	3618	3638	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375	3375				
Buffer	169	191	188	180	187	191	185	181	182	169	169	169	169	169	169	169				
Total req.	3544	4007	3939	3778	3926	4009	3883	3799	3820	3544	3544	3544	3544	3544	3544	3544				
5-yr supply	2932	3493	3508	3335	3830	4352	4619	4793	5037	4855	4526	4123	3842	3559	3260	2931				
Surplus/deficit	-612	-514	-431	-443	-96	343	736	994	1217	1311	982	579	298	15	-284	-613				
5YHLS	4.14	4.36	4.45	4.41	4.88	5.43	5.95	6.31	6.59	6.85	6.39	5.82	5.42	5.02	4.60	4.14				

