

SENT BY EMAIL
local.development@kirklees.gov.uk
18/02/2025

Dear Planning Policy Team,

KIRKLEES LOCAL PLAN UPDATE: EARLY ENGAGEMENT

1. Thank you for consulting with the Home Builders Federation (HBF) on the Kirklees Local Plan Update: Shaping a new Local Plan Early Engagement.
2. The HBF is the principal representative body of the house-building industry in England and Wales. Our representations reflect the views of our membership, which includes multi-national PLC's, regional developers and small, local builders. In any one year, our members account for over 80% of all new "for sale" market housing built in England and Wales as well as a large proportion of newly built affordable housing.
3. The HBF is keen to continue to work with the Council in order to achieve an adopted local plan which enables the delivery of homes within Kirklees. The following comments address some of the questions provided in the consultation document with potential implications for the homebuilding industry.
4. 'Building the homes we need' the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) from Angela Raynor on 30th July 2024 highlights the importance of everyone local authority having a development plan in place, and states that areas at an earlier stage of plan development should prepare plans against the revised version of the NPPF and progress as quickly as possible.

Plan Period

5. The consultation document suggests that the Local Plan will set the planning policy framework for the district for the period 2024-2043. The HBF considers that the Council will need to ensure that their Plan covers an appropriate period and that this ensures at least a 15-year period post adoption, this may mean the Council need to review the 2043 end date. The NPPF¹ states that strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities.

Local Plan Vision

6. The Council suggests that when they plan for new housing they will need to think about economic, social and environmental outcomes in a way that takes account of Kirklees local circumstances including its character, local needs and builds on the strengths and opportunities of the district.

¹ NPPF Dec 2024 paragraph 22



7. The HBF considers that it is important that the vision aims to achieve sustainable development and that this includes all three objectives in balance, economic, social and environmental. The HBF considers it is important that the Council ensures that they have a sufficient number and range of homes to meet the needs of present and future generations, this needs to include market homes as well as affordable homes, and family homes, homes for first time buyers and homes for older people. The HBF considers that this provision of homes should be a top priority.

Housing

8. The new standard method identifies a housing requirement of 1,840 dwellings per annum (dpa) for Kirklees. The consultation document highlights that the Local Plan is required to assess local housing need when preparing a Plan and to identify sites that can deliver at least five years' worth of housing. The Council suggests that they are undertaking a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to consider the cost of renting and buying, affordability, the patterns of people looking to move and the size, type and condition of current housing.
9. The NPPF² is clear that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements. The NPPF³ is also clear that Strategic policy-making authorities should establish a housing requirement figure for their whole area, which shows the extent to which their identified housing need (and any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas) can be met over the plan period. The requirement may be higher than the identified housing need if, for example, it includes provision for neighbouring areas, or reflects growth ambitions linked to economic development or infrastructure investment.
10. The HBF considers that the Council will need to consider an appropriate balance of development, to ensure that all of their housing needs are met in terms of types and tenures; locations and markets, and to ensure that the Plan can deliver against its housing requirements.
11. The HBF considers that it will be necessary to gather appropriate evidence including the proposed SHMA and a Viability Assessment to determine what types of homes may be needed and can be delivered in Kirklees. The HBF considers this is likely to include a wide range and variety of homes from homes for first time buyers, to family homes to homes to suit the older population. The HBF would encourage the Council to work with the home building industry working in the area to determine the types of homes that are currently being delivered, and where there is demand from home purchasers.
12. The HBF considers that it is appropriate for the Council to plan for the affordable needs of its community, and to ensure that it does this in line with the requirements in the NPPF⁴. This should ensure that any affordable housing requirements are clearly set out,

² NPPF Dec 2024 paragraph 61

³ NPPF Dec 2024 paragraph 69

⁴ NPPF Dec 2024 paragraphs 35, 64-68

are evidenced as viable through an assessment, and that flexibility is provided within the policy where viability may be an issue.

13. The HBF would highlight that if the evidence highlights a need for wheelchair accessible homes and the Council wishes to include a policy at a higher level than currently adopted, then the Council should only do so by applying the criteria set out in the PPG. The PPG⁵ identifies the type of evidence required to introduce a policy requiring the M4 standards, including the likely future need; the size, location, type and quality of dwellings needed; the accessibility and adaptability of the existing stock; how the needs vary across different housing tenures; and the overall viability.
14. The Council should also note that the Government response to the Raising accessibility standards for new homes⁶ states that the Government proposes to mandate the current M4(2) requirement in Building Regulations as a minimum for all new homes, with M4(1) applying in exceptional circumstances. This will be subject to a further consultation on the technical details and will be implemented in due course through the Building Regulations. M4(3) would continue to apply as now where there is a local planning policy in place and where a need has been identified and evidenced.

Healthy and Safe Communities

15. The consultation document suggests that planning policies should also aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places and buildings.
16. The HBF generally supports plans that set out how the Council will achieve improvements in health and well-being. In preparing its Local Plan the Council should normally consider the health impacts with regard to the level and location of development. Collectively the policies in the plan should ensure health benefits and limit any negative impacts and as such any development that is in accordance with that plan should already be contributing positively to the overall healthy objectives of that area.

Climate change

17. The consultation document suggests that the Council has committed to reducing carbon emissions, and that future policies could require developments to be carbon neutral, comply with energy efficiency standards and contribute to mitigating and adapting to climate change.
18. The NPPF⁷ states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner. The NPPF also highlights that sustainable development has three overarching objectives, economic, social and environmental and that these are interdependent. The Council should not be

⁵ ID: 56-007-20150327

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/raising-accessibility-standards-for-new-homes/outcome/raising-accessibility-standards-for-new-homes-summary-of-consultation-responses-and-government-response#government-response>

⁷ NPPF December 2024 paragraph 7

seeking to put one of these objectives above the others in the name of sustainable development.

19. The HBF considers that it is appropriate for the Council to allocate land for development where it is possible to access public transport routes and local services, or where access to these routes or services can be provided or improved.
20. The PPG⁸ provides examples of mitigating climate change by reducing emissions: through reducing the need to travel and providing sustainable transport; providing opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy technologies; providing opportunities for decentralised energy and heating; and promoting low carbon design approaches to reduce energy consumption in buildings. The HBF recommends that the Council seek to ensure that they produce a sustainable Plan which supports a balance of homes and employment and is in line with the guidance provided by the NPPF and the PPG.
21. The HBF considers that it is important that the Council does not set its own standards for development which may differ from the approach being taken by national Government, and that any such policy in relation to low carbon, local heat and energy solutions are implemented on a flexible basis, and that the Council recognise the decarbonisation of the national grid. This would be in line with the Written Ministerial Statement of December 2023⁹. The Council will also be aware that the Future Homes and Buildings Standards: 2023 consultation¹⁰ has been released covering Part L (conservation of fuel and power), Part F (ventilation) and Part O (overheating).
22. The NPPF¹¹ states that planning policies should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, whilst safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. It goes on to state that planning policies should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes. The HBF considers that the Council should seek to allocate brownfield land for development where it is appropriate and deliverable and where it will contribute to the spatial strategy. However, the HBF also considers that the Council will need to ensure that they have provided homes to meet all of the local needs across the housing market, this may not always be sufficiently addressed by brownfield land.

Monitoring

23. The HBF recommends that the Council include an appropriate monitoring framework which sets out the monitoring indicators along with the relevant policies, the data source and where they will be reported, this should also include the targets that the Plan is hoping to achieve and actions to be taken if the targets are not met. The HBF recommends that the Council provide details as to how the plan will actually be

⁸ PPG ID: 6-003-20140612

⁹ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2023-12-13/HCWS123>

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-and-buildings-standards-2023-consultation/the-future-homes-and-buildings-standards-2023-consultation>

¹¹ NPPF December 2024 paragraph 124

monitored, and identifies when, why and how actions will be taken to address any issues identified.

Viability

24. The Council will also need to ensure that they have considered viability, viability assessment should not compromise sustainable development but should be used to ensure that policies are realistic, and that the total cumulative costs of all relevant policies will not undermine deliverability of the Plan. The Council need to ensure that policy requirements should be set at a level that takes account of affordable housing and infrastructure needs and allows for the planned development to be deliverable without need for further viability assessment at the decision-making stage.

Future Engagement

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

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

Yours sincerely,



Joanne Harding
Planning Manager – Local Plan (North)

Email: joanne.harding@hbf.co.uk

Phone: 07972 774 229