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Sent by Email only

Dear Sir / Madam

Lincolnshire Lakes Area Action Plan – Proposed Main Modifications

Thank you for consulting with the Home Builders Federation (HBF) on the Lincolnshire Lakes AAP – Proposed Main Modifications.

The HBF is the principal representative body of the house building industry in England and Wales and our representations reflect the views of our membership of multinational PLCs, through regional developers to small, local builders. Our members account for over 80% of all new housing built in England and Wales in any one year including a large proportion of the new affordable housing stock.

We would like to submit the following comments to main modifications MM6 and MM32. The remainder of this letter responds to Part B, questions 3 to 7 of the Council's representation form and should be read in conjunction with the covering form which includes our response to all other questions.

Main Modification: MM6

The HBF consider this modification to be **unsound** as it is not **justified or effective**.

Reasoning

The modification amends the affordable housing contribution from 'up to 5%' to 'up to 20%'. This is a significant increase which is not justified by the evidence and will only serve to slow down development due to the need to negotiate upon all forthcoming applications or reduced developer interest due to viability concerns. It is recognized that the policy is related to Core Strategy policy CS9 it must, however, be noted that the Core Strategy was adopted in 2011, prior to the introduction of the NPPF and the viability tests contained within it and is therefore somewhat out of date.

The Council's own viability evidence (Ref HOU03, table 5.2) identifies even at the former code level 3, which is lower than the new Building Regulations, development viability is severely compromised at 20% affordable housing, at 5% it is much improved. In medium value areas, which the viability study (paragraph 3.15) suggests accords with the Lincolnshire Lakes, only 13% of sites are identified to be able to achieve the 20% requirement, at former code 3, reducing to 3% at former code 4. Furthermore the Council's Delivery Strategy

document (ref: TECH01) and its subsequent addendum are both built upon an assumption of 5% affordable housing delivery. Paragraph 2.6 of the Delivery Strategy notes that this is because of 'significant development constraints'. The requirement for up to 20% affordable housing would therefore appear unjustified and would be ineffective to ensuring the successful completion of the development. Furthermore Given the PPG, paragraph 10-008, is clear that plans should not be making requirements which are at the 'margins of viability'. It would appear, from the available evidence a 20% requirement would go beyond the 'margins of viability'.

Suggested Changes

It is respectfully suggested that the proposed modification is not included in the final plan, due to the viability issues identified in the Council's own evidence base. The original wording should therefore be retained.

Main Modification: MM32

The HBF consider this modification to be **unsound** as it is not **justified** or **in consistent with national guidance**.

Reasoning

The proposed modification correctly removes reference to the code for sustainable homes and notes the national technical standards adding the following sentence.

'Achieving the Governments' national technical standards should be the target for residential development in the AAP area. Where this is not achievable reasoned justification should be provided by an applicant. Building Regulations will remain a baseline standard that must be achieved.'

It is not clear if this new paragraph relates to the optional elements of the standards, or indeed which optional elements are referred too. If the Council is seeking to introduce any optional elements it cannot require applicants to justify why they cannot meet the standards, as the optional standards must first be included within the local plan and justified by appropriate evidence. The PPG, section 56, identifies how the standards should be introduced and the evidence required. The HBF is unaware of any evidence provided by the Council to justify a requirement for any of the optional elements of the national standards.

If the Council can provide evidence to support the implementation of the optional standards this can be considered and examined as part of the forthcoming review of the Local Plan.

Suggested Changes

The HBF recommend the following further modifications to the paragraph;

*'Achieving the Governments' national technical standards ~~should be the target~~ for residential development **will be supported** in the AAP area. ~~Where this is not achievable reasoned justification should be provided by an applicant.~~ Building Regulations will remain the baseline standard that must be achieved.'*

I trust that the Council and Inspector will find the foregoing useful in the continued examination of the AAP. I would be happy to discuss these comments further if required.

Yours sincerely,

MJ Good

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