

Calderdale Council
Town Hall
Crossley Street
Halifax
West Yorkshire
HX1 1UJ

SENT BY EMAIL
spatial.planning@calderdale.gov.uk
01/10/2018

Dear Sir / Madam,

CALDERDALE LOCAL PLAN

Thank you for consulting with the Home Builders Federation on the Calderdale Local Plan consultation.

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.

Following our meeting with the Council earlier in the year, and our assistance in preparing the Calderdale SHLAA, the HBF are keen to continue our positive working relationship and are pleased to see progress on the Local Plan. However, there are a few areas within the Local Plan where the HBF have concerns around the soundness of the policy and these are set out below.

Policy SD3: Housing Requirement

Policy SD3 is not considered sound as it is not positively prepared, justified or effective for the following reasons.

This policy looks for provision to be made for 12,600 additional dwellings to be delivered between 2018 and 2033, equivalent to 840 dwellings each year. However, this is a significant decrease from the 1,125 dwellings each year set out in the Initial Draft Local Plan, which leads to queries as to why the sudden change in housing requirement.

It is noted that the 12,600 housing figure is based on the MHCLG standard housing methodology. However, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) draws attention to the wording of the Government's response to the revised NPPF which states that *'the*

Government was clear that reforms set out (which included the introduction of a standard method for assessing housing need) should lead to more homes being built. In order to ensure that the outputs associated with the method are consistent with this, we will consider adjusting the method after the household projections are released in September'. Therefore, the Council should be aware that the housing figures provided by the MHCLG standard methodology are likely to change.

The figure generated by the standard method is considered as the minimum starting point, it is noted that it relies on past growth trends, which in the case of Calderdale may have been affected by the lack of appropriate site allocations and poor housing delivery. The HBF considers that there are circumstances where an uplift will be appropriate such as where growth strategies are in place (for example the Northern Powerhouse) or where funding is in place to facilitate growth such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund. It is therefore clear that in the case of Calderdale an uplift would be considered appropriate.

It is also noted that the MHCLG standard methodology will not have taken into consideration other issues that are highlighted within the Council's own evidence for example the SHMA suggests an adjustment to the household formation rates for younger people (25-34 years), in order for the housing market to return to healthier and more sustainable conditions. This remains in line with current Government strategy, which continues to seek to increase homeownership, particularly for this age group, with schemes such as Help to Buy and changes to stamp duty to support them. It would appear remiss to remove consideration of this age group within any housing requirement set within the Local Plan.

The HBF also have concerns that the proposed housing requirement does not represent an appropriate figure once consideration is given to the potential for economic growth and job formation. The HBF continue to consider that an appropriate balance should be sought between employment growth aspirations and the provision of homes.

The HBF proposes that the policy is modified as follows:

- Further consideration is given to the housing requirement, and the potential for it be increased to reflect some of the concerns raised.
- That the text of the policy is amended to provide clarity that it is a minimum figure, and that the figure is a net figure. The HBF propose the text is amended to: *'Provision is made for **a minimum of xx,xxx net** additional dwellings to be delivered within Calderdale between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2033, in order to meet the housing needs of the Borough*'.

Paragraph 6.3: Sources of Housing Supply

Extant planning permissions

1,888 dwellings have been included within the supply from extant permissions not including outline permissions. The HBF are supportive of the use of a 10% discount for sites with planning permission of less than 10 units and the recognition that some permissions will lapse or not be renewed. For proposals of 10 or more dwellings officers have made a judgement using available intelligence to ascertain the likelihood of the scheme coming forward. Whilst the HBF support the Council in

making these judgements, it still may be beneficial to include a level of discount to ensure that unforeseen events are also taken into consideration.

Windfalls

1,294 dwellings have been included within the supply from windfalls. Whilst the HBF acknowledges the previously the Council has had a healthy level of development from windfall sites, it is considered that this level of delivery will reduce over future years as the sites allocated in the Local Plan and identified in the SHLAA come forward.

The HBF are supportive of not including an allowance for windfalls in the first three years of the Plan. The HBF also supports the decision not to include the re-use of empty homes as part of the source of supply.

Policy SD7: Allocated Housing Site

Policy SD7 is not considered sound as it is not positively prepared for the following reasons.

Table 6.2 Sources of Housing Land Supply suggests that there is a housing need of 9,418 dwellings minus the extant permissions and windfalls, and that these sites for these houses will need to be allocated. The current allocations appear to show an indicative supply of 9,460 dwellings, this does not leave a lot of space for slippage and would only require a small proportion of the sites not to come forward or for the windfalls to drop off slightly, for the housing requirement to not be met. Whilst the HBF do not wish to comment upon the acceptability or otherwise of individual proposed allocations. The HBF would recommend that a greater number of sites are allocated to provide a buffer over and above those required to meet the plan requirement. The reason for the application of a buffer of sites is two-fold. Firstly, the plan housing requirement should be identified as a minimum to conform to the NPPF requirements to boost supply and plan positively. It therefore stands to reason that the plan should seek to surpass this requirement. Secondly, a buffer will provide a balance against the inevitable under or none delivery from some existing commitments or proposed allocations.

The HBF proposes that the policy is modified as follows:

- Additional sites are allocated for housing development.

Policy HW2: Health Impact Assessment

Policy HW2 is not considered sound as it is not justified, effective or consistent with national policy for the following reasons.

The HBF recognises the importance of ensuring new development supports the wider aims of local authorities and their partners to improve the health and well-being of their residents and workforce. However, the requirement for all residential development of 30 or more units to undertake a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is unnecessary and an additional burden on applicants. The PPG sets out that HIAs 'may be a useful tool to use where there is expected to be significant impacts' (ID:53-004) but it also outlines the importance of the local plan in considering the wider health issues in an area and ensuring policies respond to these. As such Local Plans

should already have considered the impact of development on the health and well-being of their communities and set out policies to address any concerns. Consequently, where a development is in line with policies in the local plan an HIA should not be necessary. Only where there is a departure from the plan should the Council consider requiring an HIA.

The HBF proposes that the policy is modified as follows:

- The reference to residential development should be deleted, or alternate text included to ensure that it will only apply to windfall sites that are considered to be a departure from the plan.
- The HBF propose the policy is modified to: '*A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) should be provided for ~~residential developments of 30 or more units~~, non-residential developments . . .*'

Policy IM6: Telecommunications and Broadband

Policy IM6 is not considered sound as it is not justified, effective or consistent with national policy for the following reasons.

The HBF generally considers that digital infrastructure is an important part of integrated development within an area. However, the inclusion of digital infrastructure such as high-speed broadband and fibre is not within the direct control of the development industry, and as such it is considered that this policy could create deliverability issues for development and developers. Service providers are the only ones who can confirm access to infrastructure. Whilst, paragraph 112 of the NPPF 2018, and paragraphs 43 to 46 of the NPPF 2012, established that local planning authorities should seek support the expansion of electronic communications networks they do not seek to prevent development that does not have access to such networks. The house building industry is fully aware of the benefits of having their homes connected to super-fast broadband and what their customers will demand. The HBF consider that in seeking to provide broadband and fibre to homes the Council should work proactively with telecommunications providers to extend provision and not rely on the development industry to provide for such infrastructure.

HBF propose that the policy is modified as follows:

- '*All new housing and employment development should consider how the benefits of high speed broadband can be provided for future occupiers. ~~Larger sites should facilitate provision of broadband, and plan for this as part of the strategic master plan for the site~~*'.

Policy HS4: Housing for Independent Living

Policy HS4 is not considered sound as it is not positively prepared, justified or consistent with national policy for the following reasons.

The HBF is generally supportive of providing homes that are suitable to meet the needs of older people and disabled people. However, if the Council wishes to adopt the higher optional standards for accessible & adaptable homes the Council should only do so by applying the criteria set out in the PPG. PPG states that where a local planning authority adopts a policy to provide enhanced accessibility or adaptability they should do so only by reference to requirement M4(2) and / or M4(3) of the

optional requirements in the Building Regulations. It was recognised that it was not appropriate to apply Category 2 or 3 standards to all new homes as not all people who buy or move in to new homes need or wish to have such provision. It is incumbent on the Council to provide a local assessment evidencing the specific case for Calderdale which justifies the inclusion of optional higher standards for accessible / adaptable homes in its Local Plan policy. PPG (ID 56-07) identifies the type of evidence required to introduce such a policy, 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. The HBF do not consider that the evidence provided is sufficient to support the policy of all homes being built to M4(2) standards. However, if this policy is to be retained then the HBF recommend that an appropriate transition period is included within the policy.

Paragraph 173 of the NPPF (2012) established the importance of viability testing to ensure that the sites and scale of development identified in the Plan should not be subject to such scale of obligations and policy burden that their ability to be developed might be threatened, this is continued into NPPF (2018) within paragraph 34. The Viability Assessment 2018 makes it clear that this policy will have significant implications for viability, particularly when considered cumulatively with other policy requirements within the plan.

HBF propose that the policy is modified as follows:

- *'Proposals for ~~residential development should ensure that 100% of units are adaptable and accessible homes~~⁽³⁰⁾ **will be supported in ~~in~~ locations in Calderdale where site specific circumstances, including topography and flood risk, are appropriate ~~will result in this requirement not being possible to achieve or would render a scheme unviable, the Council will consider reducing or waiving the requirement~~'.***

Policy HS5: Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding

Policy HS5 is not considered to be sound as it is not positively prepared or effective for the following reasons:

Many of our members will be able to assist the custom build sector either through the physical building of dwellings on behalf of the homeowner or through the provision of plots for sale to custom builders. The HBF are, therefore, not opposed to the idea of increasing the self-build and custom build sector for its potential contribution to the overall housing supply. However, the Council's approach is restrictive rather than permissive by requiring the inclusion of such housing on sites of 100 dwellings or more. This policy approach only changes the house building delivery mechanism from one form of house building company to another without any consequential additional contribution to boosting housing supply.

The HBF would recommend appropriate evidence is collated to ensure that house building delivery from this source provides an additional contribution to boosting housing supply. This is likely to include engaging with landowners and working with custom build developers to maximise opportunities. The HBF would also be

interested to see the evidence to support the idea that those wanting to self-build would actually consider building within a larger housing development.

HBF propose that the policy is modified as follows:

- ~~'On sites of 100 dwellings or more, the Council will generally seek 5% of the overall capacity to be provided as serviced plots for self or custom build need. Developers will be able to provide dwelling plots for sale to self-builders or to small/custom house-builders if demand is identified. In determining the level of provision, consideration will be given to the most up to date evidence contained within the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Register and to the viability of development'.~~

Policy HS6: Affordable Housing

Policy HS6 is not considered sound as it is not justified or consistent with national policy for the following reasons.

In general, the HBF supports the need to address the affordable housing requirements of the borough. The 2018 SHMA has not updated the affordable housing need calculation, although it suggests that it is unlikely to have changed significantly, with a continued need for affordable housing likely to be evident. The 2015 SHMA indicated that 527 affordable homes would be needed annually over five years in order to meet newly arising needs and clear the historic backlog, once the backlog had been assumed to have cleared the calculations suggested an annual need for 74 affordable homes to meet newly arising needs.

Whilst the need for affordable housing is not disputed the policy must also be based upon realistic thresholds and targets which are founded within evidence upon local plan viability. The HBF have concerns that the Viability Assessment 2018 does highlight viability issues for a number of sites and typologies, particularly brownfield sites and that these do not appear to have been taken into account in relation to the policy requirements.

Policy BT1: High quality, inclusive design

Policy BT1 is not considered sound as it is not justified or consistent with national policy for the following reasons.

The HBF is supportive of good design and is a key partner in Building for Life 12 (BfL12). The policy sets out many elements which are important design principles. However, the HBF would seek assurances that the Council will not look for residential developments to meet any requirements over and above those required by Building Regulations.

Future Engagement

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.

The HBF would like to be kept informed of the progress of this document. Please use the contact details provided below for future correspondence.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joanne Harding', with a stylized, cursive script.

Joanne Harding

Local Plans Manager – North

Email: joanne.harding@hbf.co.uk

Phone: 07972 774 229