

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017

Consultee ID: 757549

Matter 5

## **NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION**

### **MATTER 5: BUILDING HOMES**

1. The following hearing statement is made for and on behalf of the Home Builders Federation. This statement responds to selected questions set out within Matter 5 of the Inspector's *Matters, Issues and Questions*.
2. The Inspector's Issues and Questions are included in bold for ease of reference. The following responses should be read in conjunction with our comments upon the Pre-submission version of the Local Plan, dated 12<sup>th</sup> April 2016 and the Pre-submission Further Changes, dated 28<sup>th</sup> October 2017. The HBF has also expressed a desire to attend the examination hearing sessions.

**Issue 5.1: Whether the housing policies are clear, justified and consistent with national policy and whether the housing allocations and strategic housing sites are deliverable so that the Council is able to demonstrate that the Plan meets the full, objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing and gypsy and traveller sites**

#### ***Policy 11, Housing***

##### ***Q5.1 to 5.4:***

3. The HBF has no further comments at this stage.

***Q5.5: Policy 11, paras 4 and 5: what is the intended policy approach to monitoring and managing the housing land supply situation? What would be the response if supply was to fall below five years? Although the evidence base addresses the timing for the delivery of housing sites throughout the plan period, is there sufficient information in the Plan itself as to the supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth beyond the first five year period? What is the mechanism to identify sites which could be moved forward from later in the plan period?***

4. The HBF considers this a matter for the Council to address but agree that further clarity is required.
5. It is, however, worth stating that we would not support artificial phasing of sites, as this simply reduces the potential supply in the short-term and stops otherwise sustainable sites from coming forward. The recent Housing White Paper<sup>1</sup> provides clear intentions upon how Council's should deal with a lack of delivery and supply. These should be provided appropriate consideration by the Council.

**Policy 12, strategic sites**

6. The HBF has no further comments at this stage.

**Housing land supply**

***The situation as to the supply and deliverability of housing is continually evolving as sites are built out and further sites become available. Key documents in the evidence base cover different periods (HSG07, 11 and 13). It is necessary to establish a reliable, agreed base date. After that point, updates can be considered.***

***Q5.10: Based on the last complete year of data, what was the position as to the five year housing requirement and supply? Are there any updates that the Council wishes to identify? Are there any issues relating to the contribution from the strategic sites? Is there a robust evidence base, at the time of the examination, to demonstrate a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing?***

7. The HBF notes that the Council's *Five Year Housing Land Supply Update* (exam ref: HSG-13) suggests that a five year supply can be demonstrated, based upon data up to 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016<sup>2</sup>.
8. The HBF agrees that the shortfall accrued since the start of the plan period, 591 dwellings, should be added to the five year supply. We also agree that a 20% buffer is required in conformity with NPPF, paragraph 47, and that this buffer should be added after the shortfall, as set out within table 3 (HSG-13).
9. In terms of the supply we have not undertaken a thorough assessment of the likelihood of the allocations being brought forward as identified. The HBF would

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<sup>1</sup> DCLG (2017): Fixing our Broken Housing Market

<sup>2</sup> This is based upon the Council's stepped housing requirement.

expect the Council to gain appropriate evidence from the respective developers wherever possible. We do, however, have concerns that no discount appears to have been applied for the non-implementation of permissions. Many permissions will not be implemented for a host of reasons, not least changing economic or personal circumstances and some permissions being sought for reasons of valuation only. A common approach throughout many local plans is either to set a non-implementation allowance based upon previous rates or to adopt a 10% requirement. The HBF consider that the Council should re-consider its position upon this issue.

10. It is also noted that the residual allocations are provided the same lead-in time as outline permissions, this is not considered to be justified. It is unlikely that such sites can be brought forward in the same timeframe as a site which benefits from outline permission. The HBF consider that the time taken to gain outline permission be factored into the lead-in time. As such where it is justified to include residual allocations<sup>3</sup> the lead-in time should be pushed back a further year.

11. The *Five Year Housing Land Supply Update* (exam ref: HSG-13), paragraph 2.17, refers to 640 demolitions being made during the five year period due to the regeneration scheme at East Marsh, thus reducing net supply. The document then refers to spreading the impact of the demolitions over the plan period, and therefore only taking account of 425 of the demolitions in the five year period. This is counter-intuitive and unjustified, either all of the demolitions are occurring in the five year period or not. Given the evidence available the HBF consider that the full extent of the demolitions should be taken into account at the time they occur. This will inevitably further reduce the five year supply.

12. The above issues draw uncertainty to the Council's claim of being able to demonstrate a five year supply upon adoption.

***Q5.11: At adoption, will the allocations in the Plan be sufficient to ensure the continuing delivery of a 5 year supply of housing land? Will the Plan be capable of responding flexibly to changing circumstances?***

13. Within our comments upon the Pre-submission Local Plan we noted that the plan provided very little flexibility (paragraph 39) within the plan period. Whilst it is noted some capacity will be carried forward into the post-plan period without

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<sup>3</sup> Residual allocations should only be included where there is clear commitment from a developer to bring the site forward within the first five years.

alternative evidence on improved delivery rates this provides little comfort that the plan will have sufficient flexibility to deal with changing circumstances. In this regard the HBF considers that additional supply, capable of being delivered within the plan period, be considered.

**Policy 13, Housing Mix**

14. The HBF has no further comments at this stage.

**Policy 14 Elderly person's housing needs**

**Q5.14 - P2: should the policy impose the Lifetime Homes standard? Is the policy supported by evidence of the housing needs of older people?**

15. No, this standard was removed as part of the Government's Housing Standards Review. The Lifetime Homes standard was replaced by the optional accessibility standard. The PPG, section 56, paragraphs 5 to 12 provide further detail including the criteria for the introduction of the optional standards. These include;

- *the likely future need for housing for older and disabled people (including wheelchair user dwellings);*
- *size, location, type and quality of dwellings needed to meet specifically evidenced needs (for example retirement homes, sheltered homes or care homes);*
- *the accessibility and adaptability of existing housing stock;*
- *how needs vary across different housing tenures; and*
- *the overall impact on viability.*

16. The HBF is unaware that the Council can provide such justification for the introduction of the optional standards, crucially viability is likely to be a significant issue. If the Council were to seek to introduce the optional standard the HBF would like the opportunity to provide further evidence.

17. Furthermore whilst it is recognised that the policy, as amended by SPM103, is based upon *encouragement* rather than *requirement* it is unclear how such encouragement will work in practice. Without adequate justification the Council cannot require the optional accessibility standards.

**Q5.15: SPM 103: is it the role of a planning policy to explain changes in the building regulations?**

18. No, I also refer the Inspector to our response to question 5.14 above.

**Q5.16: When would it be appropriate to restrict occupancy and subsequent sale?**

19. This is unclear and could have significant effects upon the delivery of such properties and hence viability. This would need to be taken into account within the *Local Plan Viability Study*. The HBF would therefore seek justification and clarity on this point.

**Policy 15, Housing density**

**Q5.17: Is policy 15 effective? Should the density ranges be given force by inclusion in the policy?**

20. The HBF is generally supportive of the Council's approach which in our opinion provides a pragmatic response to the variances in achievable densities on a site by site basis.

**Policy 16, Affordable housing**

**Q5.18: Does the statement at P1 assist the clarity or effectiveness of the policy? Does Fig 13.3 provide sufficient clarity as to the extent of the housing market zones? Does the evidence base justify the qualifying thresholds in Table 13.12 (or SPM 105)?**

21. No, the HBF does not consider that the opening paragraph of the policy assists its clarity or effectiveness and as such it is suggested it be deleted.

22. Figure 13.3 does not provide sufficient clarity, particularly along the borders of the zones. A more detailed map would be beneficial.

23. In terms of the thresholds and targets the HBF is generally supportive of the reduced targets identified in SPM105, however, I refer the Inspector to our comments upon the Pre-submission Local Plan Modifications (paragraphs 12 to 16) which raise concerns over the proposed targets in the 'medium value zone'.

24. The threshold identified in SPM106 also need to be included to conform to the updated PPG (ID 23b-031) and associated written ministerial statement.

**Q5.19 With regard to the three considerations listed:**

**- Does the phrase 'to the Council's satisfaction' assist the effectiveness of the policy?**

**- Over what 'area' will need be considered?**

**- In what circumstances might the Council 'consider' an off-site contribution to be justified?**

25. The HBF considers that all of these points would benefit from further clarification.

**Policy 17, Rural exceptions**

26. The HBF has no comments.

**Policy 18, Self-build & custom build**

**Q5.22: Is there any evidence to indicate the proportion of housing demand which might be addressed through this policy?**

27. The HBF refers the Inspector to our comments upon the Pre-submission Local Plan, paragraphs 55 to 57. In addition self-build and custom build plots should not be required as a matter of course, it should only occur where the Council has specific evidence of interest in the site / area for such plots.

**Q5.23: Provision seems to be directed towards 'self-build'. Does the policy actually address demand from 'custom builders'?**

28. The HBF has no further comments.

**Q5.24 - P1: Does the phrase 'In addition to "windfall" development opportunities,' introduce a lack of clarity? P3: is there any justification for the 24 month period?**

29. The HBF is concerned that a 24 month period is too long and may inhibit the development of a site. The HBF is unaware of any justification for this period of time. It is recommended this time period be reduced.

**Policy 19, Gypsies and travellers**

30. The HBF has no comments.

Yours sincerely,

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