

Planning Policy Team  
Craven District Council  
Council Offices  
Belle Vue Square  
Broughton Road  
Skipton  
North Yorkshire  
BD23 1FJ

SENT BY EMAIL  
[localplan@cravencd.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@cravencd.gov.uk)  
03/04/2018

Dear Sir / Madam,

### **CRAVEN LOCAL PLAN: PUBLICATION DRAFT (Reg 19)**

Thank you for consulting with the Home Builders Federation on the Publication Draft Craven Local Plan Regulation 19 document.

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.

The Council will be aware that the HBF provided comments upon the previous drafts of the plan, dated 31<sup>st</sup> October 2014, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

#### **Plan Period**

The plan period is clearly set out at paragraph 1.1 and 1.8 of the document. It is noted that the end date remains at 2032. Whilst it is recognised that the Council previously extended the plan period from 2030 to 2032 the slippage in plan preparation means that it is now unlikely to achieve a 15-year time horizon post adoption. The Council will be aware that the NPPF, paragraph 157, identifies a preference for a time horizon of at least 15 years. The HBF suggests that the Council consider further extending the plan period to accord with this preference.

#### **Duty to Cooperate**

The Council have prepared a Cross-boundary Strategic Issues and Duty to Cooperate Statement, this details the cross-boundary issues and the bodies that the Council have worked with. Appendix 1 contains the MoU between the Council and

the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, this provides a level of agreement on the housing figure for Craven, it does not however provide details on how the full OAN will be met across the housing market area. The key concerns of the HBF relate to housing need and delivery, and the need for the authorities of the housing market area to work together to ensure that the need is met, and homes are delivered. The HBF consider there is still further work to do on this issue.

The Government proposes that all Councils will have a Statement of Common Ground (its draft form in place in six months) in place twelve months from the publication of the revised NPPF (anticipated in 2018). If any Statements of Common Ground are prepared the HBF may wish to submit further comments on the Council's legal compliance with the Duty.

### **DRAFT POLICY SP1: MEETING HOUSING NEED**

*This policy is not considered to be sound, as it is not considered to be positively prepared, justified or consistent with national policy.*

This policy looks to make a minimum provision for 4,600 net additional dwellings over the plan period, equating to an average of 230 dwellings per annum.

The 2017 SHMA update increases the OAN to 242 dwellings per annum, with 206 dwellings attribute to the Craven Local Plan area, and 36 dwellings to the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The Yorkshire Dales Local Plan was adopted in 2016, it looks to expand the supply of housing to meet a target of 55 new dwellings each year. However, the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan covers more than just the Craven district HMA. It is not clear how much of the OAN from Craven will be provided for within the National Park, and as mentioned previously this is not covered by the MoU or the Duty to Cooperate Statement. Therefore, it is not clear, whether the OAN is being met in full or not. It is noted that previously the Local Plan had chosen to utilise the figure for the whole of Craven district as its housing figure ignoring any contribution to be made by the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan.

It is noted that some of the comments made previously by the HBF in relation to the SHMA appear to have been given consideration, for example the use of the alternative headship rates which see rates for the 25-34 age group return to a mid-point between the 2014 and 2008 based rates by 2033. However, the HBF would continue to suggest that a higher housing figure would assist the Council in dealing with the increasing need for affordable housing in line with PPG (ID2a-029).

HBF propose that the policy is modified as follows:

- The HBF recommend that further consideration is given to the housing requirement to ensure that the OAN is met and that an appropriate level of affordable housing is provided.

### **DRAFT POLICY SP3: HOUSING MIX AND DENSITY**

*This policy is not considered to be sound, as it is not considered to be effective or justified.*

The HBF notes that this policy has been amended to increase flexibility and this is generally considered an improvement. However, the HBF still consider that it is important that any policy is workable and ensures housing delivery will not be compromised or stalled due to overly prescriptive requirements or the need to provide significant amounts of additional evidence.

The draft policy still identifies a very prescriptive mix of house types, although it is noted that this is no longer down to decimal places. And whilst the policy suggests this is a general guide, thereby providing a degree of flexibility, it appears this will need to be justified in every case.

The HBF therefore continues to recommend a more flexible approach is taken regarding housing mix which whilst taking account of the SHMA findings is also cognisant that needs and demand will vary from area to area and site to site and that the need to provide evidence for each and every variation to this very specific mix is likely to delay development and may reduce deliverability of sites.

The HBF also remains unclear of the justification for a density requirement of 32dph, and suggest that it is removed. Again, it is not clear how this will be applied flexibly and what evidence the Council will require of developers looking to deviate from this policy requirement.

HBF propose that the policy is modified as follows:

- *The mix and density of new housing developments will ensure that land is used in an effective and efficient manner to address local housing needs. ~~This will be achieved in the following ways:~~*
  - a) ~~The local planning authority will use the housing mix set out below as a general guide for achieving an appropriate overall mix of new housing across the plan area and across all tenures;~~
    - ~~Homes with 1-2 bedrooms—39%~~
    - ~~Homes with 3 bedrooms—44%~~
    - ~~Homes with 4 or more bedrooms—17%~~
  - b) ~~The local planning authority will use 32 dwellings per hectare (net) as a general guide for achieving an appropriate overall housing density across the plan area and across all tenures;~~
  - e) *The local planning authority will **work with developers to deliver housing that contributes to the identified needs taking** ~~apply the general guides, set out in parts a) and b) above, flexibly to ensure that individual proposals across the plan area are able to take~~ account of local variations in housing need, **local characteristics**, scheme viability or other site-specific circumstances, which may indicate that a different housing mix or density is required in order to achieve local plan objectives.*

#### **DRAFT POLICY SP4: SPATIAL STRATEGY AND HOUSING GROWTH**

*This policy is not considered to be sound, as it is not considered to be positively prepared or effective.*

The HBF are supportive of amendments to this policy to clearly acknowledge that the figures are provided as a guide only.

The HBF would continue to suggest that the housing provision figure identified in the policy is clearly identified as a minimum as set out in SP1. The HBF are also keen to ensure that appropriate and sustainable developments are delivered, we would not want the rigid application of this policy to prevent any additional development.

HBF propose that the policy is modified as follows:

- *Guidelines for the distribution of new dwellings to deliver the spatial strategy is set out in the table below:*

Tier	Settlement	<i>Proportion of housing growth (%) at 230 dwellings pa</i>	<b>Minimum</b> Housing Provision ( <del>approx.</del> number of NET dwellings pa)
------	------------	---	---

### **DRAFT POLICIES SP5 TO SP11**

The HBF does not wish to comment upon the acceptability or otherwise of individual allocations. It is, however, recommended that the housing yield in each policy is clearly identified as an indicative figure. The HBF also recommends that a buffer of sites over and above the residual requirement is identified. This is required to ensure that the plan meets its housing requirement as a minimum and to take account of the inevitable slow or non-implementation from some sites.

### **DRAFT POLICY ENV3: GOOD DESIGN**

*This policy is not considered to be sound, as it is not considered to be effective, justified or consistent with national policy.*

There are a number of criteria within this policy that cause concern for the HBF, and that require further clarity and / or evidence in order for them to be considered sound.

Criterion (i) looks for development proposals to be accessible and inclusive and to everyone. Whilst the HBF is generally supportive of providing for the needs of older people and other specialist groups, it is not clear what this policy is requiring of home builders. PPG (ID 56-07) identifies the type of evidence required to introduce a policy for accessible and adaptable homes, 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. It is incumbent on the Council to provide a local assessment evidencing the specific case for Craven which justifies the inclusion of optional higher standards for accessible and adaptable homes. Evidence of an ageing population does not in itself justify the requirements of this policy, without appropriate evidence the HBF would not support the introduction of this policy.

Whilst within part (m) developers are encouraged to build new homes to the ‘Lifetime Homes’ standard so that they can be readily adapted to meet the needs of those with disabilities and the elderly as well as assisting independent living at home. The Council will probably be aware that the Lifetime Homes standard is no longer applicable following the Government’s Housing Standards review. Lifetime Homes have now been replaced by the optional Building Regulations accessibility standards.

These standards can be introduced via a plan but only where there is specific evidence to justify their inclusion, as set out above. The HBF is unaware that the Council can provide the necessary evidence at this stage and as such this criterion is not supported.

Criterion (u) states that sustainability should be designed in, so that development takes the opportunity to reduce energy use and water use, carbon emissions and minimise waste and ensure future resilience to a changing climate. Developments should also take the opportunity wherever possible to generate power through solar or other means. Whilst the HBF does not generally object to encouragement to reduce energy or to generate power through solar or other means, it is important that this is not interpreted as a mandatory requirement. This would be contrary to the Government's intentions, as set out in Fixing the Foundations and the Housing Standards Review, which specifically identified energy requirements for new housing development to be a matter solely for Building Regulations with no optional standards. The Deregulation Act 2015 was the legislative tool used to put in place the changes of the Housing Standards Review. This included an amendment to the Planning and Energy Act 2008 to remove the ability of local authorities to require higher than Building Regulations energy efficiency standards for new homes. Transitional arrangements were set out in a Written Ministerial Statement in March 2015.

It is also considered that the Council will also need to consider the potential cost of the requirements set out in parts (i), (m) and (u), as if these principles are taken as requirements for development they are likely to impact on the viability and deliverability of development.

HBF propose that the policy is modified as follows:

- The HBF recommend the Council ensure they have the appropriate evidence to support the introduction of parts (i) and (m) of this policy or that the elements that are not justified are deleted from the policy.
- That further clarity is added to part (u) to ensure that it is clear that home builders will not be required to provide additional measures over and above those currently set out in Building Regulations.

#### **DRAFT POLICY H1: SPECIALIST HOUSING FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

*This policy is not considered to be sound, as it is not considered to be effective, justified or consistent with national policy.*

As set out in response to Policy ENV3, whilst the HBF is generally supportive of the provision of specialist housing for older people any requirement to build 'Lifetime Homes' is no longer appropriate, and any new policies to require adaptable and accessible homes needs to be supported by appropriate evidence.

The HBF note that Policy H1 requires proposals for the provision of specialist housing for older people to be in accordance with Policy H2 for affordable housing and INF3 for open space and sports facilities. However, the Council's Viability Report Addendum highlights the viability issues that are common for supported living and identifies issues with the delivery of the 30% housing target. The Council should be

mindful that it is unrealistic to negotiate every site on a one by one basis because the base-line aspiration of a policy or combination of policies is set too high as this will jeopardise delivery. The HBF would expect site by site negotiations to occur occasionally rather than routinely and would recommend that this policy has a lower more appropriate affordable housing requirement.

HBF propose that the policy is modified as follows:

- The HBF recommend that the Council removes reference to accordance with policy H2 and INF3 and includes a more appropriate affordable housing target and open space contributions or provision. Ensuring that specialist homes are viable and deliverable.
- The HBF recommend the Council ensure they have the appropriate evidence to support the introduction of part (b) of this policy or that the elements that are not justified are deleted from the policy.

## **DRAFT POLICY H2: AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

*This policy is not considered to be sound, as it is not considered to be effective.*

The HBF supports the provision of affordable housing. The HBF also acknowledges the amendment to the policy to reduce the affordable housing target from 40% to 30%. However, the HBF has concerns in relation to the language used in the policy, particularly reference to 'exceptional circumstances', it would be more appropriate to refer to the viability of development, as this is most likely to be the reason for the need to reduce the provision of affordable housing.

HBF propose that the policy is modified as follows:

- *Development proposals that seek to provide a lower level of affordable housing contribution will ~~not be~~ **only** be acceptable ~~unless where~~ it can be ~~clearly~~ demonstrated that **the development would not be viable unless the exceptional circumstances exist which justify a reduced** affordable housing contribution **is reduced**.*

## **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 all forthcoming consultations upon the Local Plan and associated documents. Please use the contact details provided below for future correspondence.

Yours sincerely,



**Joanne Harding**

**Local Plans Manager – North**

Email: [joanne.harding@hbf.co.uk](mailto:joanne.harding@hbf.co.uk)

Phone: 07972 774 229