
Herefordshire Council response to comments on Update of Five Year Housing Land Supply (2015-2020)

1. Introduction

1.1 Following discussions at the Core Strategy examination hearings, the Inspector asked the Council to review certain elements of the work on the 5-year housing supply (Examination Document J4). In particular, the Inspector requested that the Council consider the following areas:

- the justification for submission Core Strategy housing trajectory;
- a delivery of the strategic housing proposals;
- the removal of a 10% discount for non-completion of planning permissions;
- the removal of care homes from the supply;
- a reconsideration of the likely housing contribution that neighbourhood development plans add to the five year supply;
- a comparison of the Council's indicative trajectory and alternative annualised trajectory upon the short and long term 'shortfall' scenarios.
- the addition of the 20% buffer requirement to both the shortfall of housing in the short and long term.

1.2 In undertaking this work the Council also took note of the debate at the hearing to look again at the housing supply position including housing proposals with a resolution to grant planning permission and existing allocated sites without planning permission.

1.3 This work was set out in an Updated Five Year Housing Land Supply Paper (2015-2020) ¹ and which was subsequently subject to a targeted seven day consultation. Thirteen responses were received as follows:

ID	Name	Organisation
200	Mr M Evans	Gladman Developments
261	Mr N Gough	Nigel Gough Associates Ltd
268	Mr O Jones	Boyer Planning
271	Dr AJ Geeson	
275	Cllr S Robertson	Holmer and Shelwick PC
283	Mrs E Morawiecka	
292	Ms SE Green	Home Builders Federation
313	Mr A Burrows	Burrows-Hutchinson Ltd
314	Mr K Warren	Asbri Planning

¹ Update of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy Examination in Public, Five year housing land supply (2015-2020) <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/core-strategy/examination-of-the-herefordshire-local-plan-core-strategy/post-hearing-and-further-consultations/five-year-housing-land-supply-consultation>

326	Mr T Watton	RPS Planning and Development
334	Mrs V Wegg-Prosser	Here for Hereford
242	Mr I Jardin	CPRE
259	Ms L Steele	Framptons

For ease of reference similar comments and Council responses have been grouped together under subheadings below with the representor's ID numbers shown in brackets.

2. Approach to the Objectively Assessed Need

(275, 271, 283, 326)

- 2.2 Some of the comments were critical that the most recently-published (27 February 2015) Objectively Assessed Housing Need had not been used. At the hearing the Inspector requested that an assessment should be undertaken on the effect of the publication of the 2012 Household Projections on the amount of housing required in the county. A separate consultation is taking place on this matter and as such is not responded to in detail in this paper.

3. Indicative trajectory approach as opposed to annualised trajectory approach

(200, 292, 326)

- 3.1 The Council has set out its justification for the housing trajectory in Section 5 of the updated Five Year Supply Paper. A number of the objectors have reaffirmed their concern that the justification for the indicative trajectory was not adequate and an annualized target should be used.
- 3.2 The Council submits that the most practical and deliverable approach to achieving the full Objectively Assessed Housing Need for the plan period is through delivering broadly according to the indicative trajectory. Contrary to the comments of RPS the Council submits that the Core Strategy sets out to meet the full Objectively Assessed Needs (OAN) for housing. It is not accepted that the proposed approach does not accord with paragraph 47 of the NPPF. Indeed as the latest work from GL Hearn suggests the Council's housing target will more than meet the OAN.
- 3.3 The Council acknowledges that housing completion rates have been low in recent years. However it contends that it is being proactive in increasing housing supply in the County. Furthermore, the proposed main modifications to Policy SS3 will help ensure that the plan's housing targets are achieved. Additionally the proposed main modifications will include a more detailed and updated annual housing trajectory and provide details of the links between the delivery of key infrastructure and housing targets. Contrary to the comments made by the HBF the Council considers there are very clear similarities between the position in Herefordshire and that set out in the Inspector's Report at Gravesham.

4. Assessment of existing commitments

(200, 326)

- 4.1 The responses of both Gladman Developments and RPS include a degree of criticism of the approach to existing commitments. However, the commitments listed in Appendix 3 have not been subject to any review or amendment through the work as part of this review and they were not challenged or discussed in detail at the February hearings.

However, the NPPF is clear in para 47, footnote 11 that '*sites with planning permission should be considered deliverable until permission expires, unless there is clear evidence that schemes will not be implemented within five years, for example they will not be viable, there is no longer a demand for the type of units or sites have long term phasing plans.*' The emphasis is on implementation of the site and not its complete delivery within the five year period. The Council contends that the sites in Appendix 3 are compliant with the NPPF approach in general and this footnote in particular.

- 4.2 The suggestion by RPS that the Pencombe Lane site in Bromyard (which was refused planning permission on 4 March 2015) forms part of the five year supply is incorrect. This site forms no part of the calculation of the 5-year housing supply.

5. Removal of the 10% Discount

(200, 292, 326)

- 5.1 There was some criticism to the removal of the 10% discount on the basis that the Council had included it in the original J4 Examination document. However, the discount rate was deleted following advice given to the Council from the Inspector at the hearing session. At that time it was indicated that there was no reason to reduce supply by including a discount rate in the calculations.

6. Inclusion of sites with a resolution to grant planning permission

(200)

- 6.1 Gladman Developments query why sites with a resolution to grant planning permission have been included. However some commentators indicated at the hearings that the Council had not included the full housing supply in the original paper. On review, it was apparent that a number of housing proposals (where the decision to approve by the Council had been made between April 2013 and the end of March 2014 subject to Section 106 Agreements) had been omitted from the original J4 document. These are available sites where the decisions notices have subsequently been issued and the Council submits that it is entirely appropriate to include them within the 5-year supply. Given they did not form part of the original Appendix 3 it was appropriate to include them in Appendix 5 of the Updated Paper.

7. Sites with planning permission granted from April to September 2014.

(200)

- 7.1 It is common ground that housing supply is increasing in the County. The 5-year supply position at the point of the adoption of the Core Strategy will be that as of April 2015. These post-April 2014 sites demonstrate the level of increased supply in recent months. The Council recognise that the figure does not account for the shortfall or expired permissions. Nevertheless the increase in supply will far outweigh the loss of extant sites and completions during this period and it is a trend which has continued in the period since September 2014. The use of this time limited set of permissions is considered to be a conservative indication of the likely increased housing supply over the year.

- 7.2 The Council acknowledges that there was duplication included in Appendix 5 for 20 dwellings in Wellington (Ref. 141253). With the removal of 20 dwellings from a total of 819 the revised total is 799 for this category of sites.

8. The inclusion of a Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (HUDP) allocated site

(200)

- 8.1 As indicated earlier there was discussion at the hearing session regarding the non-inclusion of various sites including those allocated in the HUDP. There are some UDP sites which do not have planning permissions. The Council recognises that the outstanding sites will have no status once the Core Strategy is adopted and it would not be appropriate to include all of these sites. However, the site at Whitecross Road in Hereford has been subject to a resolution to grant planning permission. As such the Council is confident that the site has been correctly included.
- 8.2 For the avoidance of doubt, there was no reliance on any other UDP sites in the supply calculations in the Update Paper as suggested by RPS in reference to Bromyard allocated sites.

9. Criticism of the approach to Strategic Urban Extension development rates

(200, 259, 271, 275, 314, 326)

- 9.1 The representations make some criticism of the Council's approach to build out rates for strategic urban extensions. This was a matter discussed in detail at the hearing sessions. As a result of the discussion the build out rates for the strategic sites were reviewed and a more conservative approach taken. However, the estimates broadly reflect the work undertaken on bringing forward the sites and detailed discussions with developers.
- 9.2 The specific consultation exercise on this matter has continued the debate regarding the length of time which should be allowed for lead in times. However the strategic sites identified in the core strategy have been advanced for a number of years. This is reflected in Boyer Planning's response. The majority of the sites are the subject of pre-application discussions. A planning application has now been submitted for the Holmer West site. Applications on several other strategic sites are expected shortly. Irrespective of the practical discussion around lead in times, it is very clear that the identified strategic housing sites in the Plan are well into that lead time in their own right.
- 9.2 There is a suggestion that the yield of site at Ledbury has been increased since the hearing. This is not correct. The figures were included in the Statement of Common Ground with the site's agent which was discussed in detail at the hearing session on Ledbury. Subsequent pre-application discussions have confirmed the position.
- 9.3 Gladman Developments have included the Hourigan Connolly Sustainable Urban Extensions Report in their response. The Inspector has already indicated at two separate hearing occasions that this report would not be accepted. The Council submits that this position should continue to apply. In particular no other parties have been given an opportunity to respond to this report through the most recent technical consultation exercise.

10. Approach to inclusion of Neighbourhood Development Plan figure

(200)

- 10.1 Gladman Developments suggest a lower estimate for Neighbourhood Plan sites than the 100 dwellings estimate in the updated paper. The Council contend that this is a conservative estimate given the progress of Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) in Herefordshire and which has already been set out in a separate examination document.

11. Shortfall from previous years addressed via the Sedgfield or Liverpool approach

(200, 259, 283, 292, 314, 326)

- 11.1 The updated paper provides alternative approaches as requested by the Inspector to show how the shortfall would appear in both the indicative trajectory and the annualised trajectory.
- 11.2 The Inspector also requested that the Council set out how the shortfall would be addressed using the short term five year approach and the longer term remaining Plan period approach. Again this has been compared with both the indicative and annualised trajectory as requested.
- 11.3 There is criticism that that the Council had revised this element of the methodology independently and that this is a substantive change to the Core Strategy. However this was as a result of a specific request made by the Inspector to do so. Within the context of the presentation of the four scenarios in figures 10a-10d, the Council has expressed a clear preference for the scenario in Figure 10b.

12. Summary of other comments

- 12.1 Other responses made a variety of other comments not directly related to the changes suggested to the 5-year housing supply paper. These include some site specific issues, comments on the distribution of housing in general and in respect of rural areas in particular. These are issues which were discussed in detail at hearing sessions and the Council does not consider it necessary or appropriate to respond in detail.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1 The Updated Paper primarily responds to the Inspector's request for further information and justification in respect of specific points and as a direct result of discussions at the hearings.
- 13.2 The Council submits that the responses do not alter the position of the five year housing land supply position. Its preferred approach is to make up any shortfall over the whole Plan period. This is the approach demonstrated in Figure 10b of the Update Paper. The Council has been clear about how the Plan will deliver housing to ensure that there will be a deliverable supply of housing land and see this as the most effective way to boost the County's housing supply. The approach adopted is also the most realistic in all the circumstances. The Council has worked with developers and landowners to produce a range and distribution of housing in the

County that is both sustainable, that reflects the existing and proposed physical and environmental infrastructure and is capable of being delivered. Detailed work has been carried out with land owners and proposed developers on the strategic housing sites and proposals are now well-advanced. More broadly this work is already underpinned by the roll out of neighbourhood plans and will be supported by the imminent production of the Hereford Area Plan.

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