

Briefing Note –Five-year housing supply

5-year housing supply position

1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of housing sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements. Where the existence of a five year land supply cannot be demonstrated, there is a presumption in favour of granting planning permission for new housing unless the development can be shown to cause demonstrable harm to other factors that outweigh the need for new housing. Other factors in this respect can include sites or areas protected as a result of their wider environmental importance or land at risk of flooding.
2. In respect of the housing requirement the NPPF requires local authorities to meet objectively assessed needs (OAN). GL Hearn has updated its work on the local housing requirements to identify the objectively assessed need for Herefordshire over the plan period up (2011-31). The report supports the level of housing provision set out in the submitted Core Strategy.
3. Therefore, it is considered appropriate to use the submitted Core Strategy's housing target and trajectory of 16,500 new dwellings as the basis of determining the number of years supply.
4. Two assessments of the housing land supply position have been recently undertaken. The first was prepared as a necessary accompaniment to the submission of the Core Strategy. It provides an assessment of the housing supply position at the time of **adoption** of the Core Strategy. This assessment includes a contribution from the strategic sites identified within the Core Strategy as well as recent planning approvals (post April 2014). It demonstrates that there will be a 5-year supply of housing land on adoption of the Core Strategy. This statement is available on the Council's website.
5. The second assessment provides the annual update required by the NPPF and considers the situation as of **April 2014**. It will be incorporated into this year's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).
6. The annual assessment does not include the Core Strategy strategic proposals, as they are not currently considered to be deliverable. The annual 2014 supply position suggests the supply stands at **2.47 years**. Details of the methodology and calculations are set out in full in the Position Statement which has been published on the Council website.

Circumstances where prematurity can justify refusal of planning applications

7. The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) provides advice regarding the consideration of whether prematurity can justify refusal of planning applications. The NPPG indicates that arguments that an application is premature could only justify a refusal where it is clear that the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits and would seldom be justified prior to the **submission** of a plan. Plainly the Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State in September 2014.
8. However, the guidance also makes clear that the development proposed should be so substantial, or its cumulative effect so significant, that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of new development that are central to an emerging Local Plan or associated neighbourhood plans.
9. In the interim period up to the adoption of the Core Strategy further advice regarding the issue of prematurity will be provided if necessary. However, the absence of a 5-year supply of housing land will remain an important material consideration in determining planning applications. The methodology for establishing the 5-year housing position assumes a continuing supply of housing on windfall sites.

Conclusion

10. Recent work undertaken to update the housing supply position in Herefordshire has shown that:
 - a) on adoption of the Core Strategy the Council will be able to demonstrate a five-year supply;
 - b) the latest annual update of housing supply (based on April 2014) indicates that the council cannot yet demonstrate the existence of a five-year supply.
11. With the submission of the Core Strategy it may be appropriate to consider the issue of prematurity as a reason for refusal. However, this could only be justified where:
 - a) proposals resulted in harmful impacts which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any benefits;
 - b) proposals are so substantial that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions that are central to an emerging Local Plan.
12. In the period up to the adoption of the Core Strategy the absence of a 5-year supply of housing land will continue to be an important material consideration in making planning decisions with a continuing expectation that windfall sites will be required to contribute to the required housing supply.