

Issue 3: Housing provision (policy 3); Housing Mix and Quality (policy 21); Affordable Housing (policy 22), Density (policy 23) and provision for Gypsies Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (policies 24 and 25)

3.1 Does the figure of 6,825 dwellings (325 dwellings a year) for the period 2011-2032 accurately reflect full objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing? Is the figure based on up-to-date and reliable evidence?

No comment.

3.2 Having identified the need for housing over the plan period (6,825 dwellings), has the Council undertaken the appropriate assessments in order to justify its conclusion that the District cannot meet all that need (or a greater proportion than the 3,609 dwellings proposed) within its own boundary. Have those sites identified in the SHLAA, that were rejected by the Council, been appropriately assessed? (see also question 7.1).

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF requires 'Local Plans to meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change'. We acknowledge paragraph 2.4 of the ALP, which states 'Realistic options for locating development are extremely limited due to the compact size of the Local Plan area and its constrained location between the sea and the South Downs National Park'. In this context the strategic allocations at land west of Sompting and New Monks Farm are crucial to delivering the proposed spatial strategy in accordance with the NPPF.

On this basis whilst our client supports the ALP and recognises the significant constraints in the District, they believe that the proposed housing target is too low. To address this concern our client believes that further efforts should be made to identify other sources of housing delivery, which may require further greenfield allocations and increasing the capacity of the existing strategic allocations. In this regard our client is of the view that the Sompting allocation has the potential to increase its capacity, although this may require a review of the existing boundary. It is believed that such an approach would help the consideration of the plan against the 'soundness' tests in paragraph 182 of the NPPF.

3.3 Has an adequate assessment of potential brownfield development sites been undertaken?

No comment.

3.4 Does the plan identify a supply of deliverable sites, sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing, with an additional buffer of 5% (or 20% as appropriate)?

No comment.

3.5 Does the plan identify a supply of deliverable sites for years 6 to 10 and where possible for years 11 to 15?

No comment.

3.6 Should the submitted plan include a housing trajectory?

Paragraph 47 of the NPPF sets out a number of measures that local authorities should undertake in order to 'boost significantly the supply of housing'. The fourth bullet under this paragraph explains that these

measures should include a housing trajectory 'to illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery'. In view of the planned under delivery of housing against the OAN, it is critical that the Council monitor the progress of meeting the ALP's housing target in order to avoid a worsening situation occurring.

Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states 'Local Plans should meet their objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change unless:

- any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework as a whole; or
- specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted.'

Although it is accepted that the ALP is proposed as a constraint based plan, which will not meet its OAN, it remains important that the plan still contains sufficient mechanisms to monitor delivery and take steps if the stated targets are not being met. In the event that such monitoring indicates under delivery against the housing targets, the plan could include mechanisms to explore alternative delivery such as the inclusion of omission sites or increased delivery from the Strategic Allocations.

Such an approach would provide the plan with added flexibility and would help to ensure that the ALP can be claimed to be 'positively prepared', 'effective' and 'consistent with national policy' as required by paragraph 182 of the NPPF.

3.7 *Is the calculation of the windfall allowance robust and justified?*

No comment.

3.8 *Is there enough flexibility embodied in the Council's approach so that it could react quickly to any unforeseen change in circumstances? (see also question 18.2)*

See our response to question 3.6.

3.9 *Has the relationship between economic growth in the District and the provision of new housing been adequately addressed?*

No comment.

3.10 *Are the requirements of policy 21: Housing Mix and Quality, reasonable and justified? Has the Council properly addressed the housing needs of the elderly and people with disabilities?*

Paragraph 50 of the NPPF requires local authorities to 'deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive mixed use communities' it then goes on to state that they should 'plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community...'. Although the housing mix policy seeks to follow this objective, the current wording is considered to be too prescriptive and inflexible. Our client believes that the policy should instead refer to a preferred mix based on local housing need (which should be derived from the most up-to-date SHMA), but should allow some flexibility so that individual developments can respond to the site circumstances and the local market.

In its current form we consider that the policy is not reasonable or justified and would therefore fail the tests of 'soundness' in paragraph 182 of the NPPF.

3.11 Does the plan make appropriate provision or affordable housing in accordance with national policy? Are the proposed percentages, as set out in policy 22, viable, deliverable and justified?

The Government published the Housing and Planning Act 2016, which included primary legislation for Starter Homes. As it is anticipated that Starter Homes will be recognised as a form of affordable housing in the new Housing White Paper¹, specific reference to them should be included in Policy 22 of the ALP.

3.12 Is the preferred mix of tenure (as set out in policy 22), viable, deliverable and justified?

Policy 22 includes a preferred affordable housing tenure of 75% social/affordable rented housing and 25% intermediate housing. This is based on the evidence of need from ADC's Objectively Assessed Need for Housing report dated August 2015 and follows the guidance in paragraph 50 of the NPPF.

As this need is based on a district wide requirement, our client believes that the policy should provide some flexibility over tenure to allow individual developments to provide a tenure mix that is appropriate to the location, type and form of housing being provided alongside the timing of any delivery. Such an approach would ensure that the policy could be considered both 'justified' and 'effective' as required by paragraph 182 of the NPPF.

3.13 Is the proposed minimum density of 35 dwellings per hectare reasonable and justified (policy 23)?

No comment.

3.14 Is the Council providing sufficient support for people wishing to build their own homes?

No comment.

3.15 Is the Plan based on up-to-date and reliable evidence of the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople, and does it make deliverable provision to meet such needs (policy 24)? Are all the requirements of policy 24 reasonable and justified?

No comment.

Summary

Our client recognises that the District of Adur is physically constrained with limited opportunities to meet its housing need. On this basis whilst the Inspector may deem the plan 'sound' even if it is not meeting its OAN, such an approach must be fully justified with sufficient mechanisms in the plan to ensure that the District delivers the maximum number of achievable dwellings over the plan period.

The policies requiring a mix of housing and affordable housing must contain sufficient flexibility to enable developments to respond to local and site specific circumstances and maintain flexibility throughout the plan period. Provision should also be made for Starter Homes.

¹ At the time of writing the White Paper has not been published.