

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting11th July 2013

1. Title of Item/Report

Five Year Housing Supply 2013-2018

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that informed Members of the completion of the Five Year Deliverable Housing Supply Final Assessment 2013 – 2018. The report would be updated quarterly on a trial basis.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) stated that local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against their housing requirements.

An additional buffer of 5% was required to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there had been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, the buffer should increase to 20%.

The NPPF did not define persistent under delivery. The authority takes the view that the record of housing delivery in the Borough was robust in the context of the challenging conditions in the housing market. Therefore a buffer of 5% had been added.

The report showed that the authority had a deliverable housing supply of 3.96 years with a 5% buffer added, which was a shortfall of 630 dwellings. This meant that the authority was not able to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites.

The issue of whether or a 5% or 20% buffer is appropriate was debated at the recent Land off Low Lane, Ingleby Barwick Public Inquiry. It was possible that the Inspector's Report would comment on this issue. If a 20% buffer were added then the deliverable housing supply would be 3.46 years which was a shortfall of 1062 dwellings.

It was suggested that the authority must have a five year supply as about 1000 dwellings had been granted consent since the Five Year Deliverable Housing Supply Final Assessment 2012 - 2017 Report was published. However, the five year deliverable housing supply assessment

was concerned with how many dwellings would be built within 5 years, rather than the total number with planning permission. For example, the developer for the Morley Carr, Yarm planning permission (350 dwellings) had estimated a build out of 120 dwellings within a five year time frame.

It was also relevant that the housing requirement was a 'net' requirement. This meant that it was net of demolitions and other losses to the Borough's dwelling stock. When there was an addition to the number of demolitions / losses that were planned this had to be taken into account. For example, since the previous five year supply assessment a total of 254 demolitions had been approved for Victoria Estate and all of these were scheduled to take place within five years.

At a recent Planning Committee meeting, Members expressed concern that reliance was still being placed on the previous five year housing assessment and requested that recent planning approvals be added in to the next update.

The report used a base date of 31-3-2013. This meant that it did not show that the Section 106 (S.106) Agreement for the Allens West planning application had been signed. This did not alter the delivery assessment for Allens West as this anticipated the signing of the S.106 Agreement. Nor did it make any reference to planning approvals granted since this time.

However, in view of the concerns expressed by Members the report would be updated on a quarterly basis. The base date for the next update was 30-6-2013 which meant that it would be assessing the five year housing supply for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2018. The quarterly update would be done initially on a trial basis to assess whether the commitment of officer time required was proportionate to the benefits of the exercise.

The updated quarterly report would be available late July / early August depending on how soon all of the relevant data was available. In addition to new planning approvals, data regarding housing completions and demolitions / losses would be updated so that the baseline was robust.

However, quarterly reports would not include a new exercise of contacting all developers for updated housing build out schedules. This would continue to be done on an annual basis.

It was noted that no decision notice had been issued regarding the decision of the Planning Committee of 4-6-2013 to grant permission for 370 dwellings at Green Lane, Yarm. This was because an Article 25 Directive had been issued. This meant that the Secretary of State had

been asked to call-in the application for his consideration. For this reason this cannot, at the present time, be considered to be either a planning permission or a commitment.

It had been suggested that the authority should review the housing requirement. The housing requirement was stated in the Adopted Core Strategy and could only be changed through the plan process. As part of the Regeneration and Environment LDD process, representations had been made regarding the housing requirement. These had included both expressions of support for a lower requirement and the contention that the requirement should be higher. The preference of the authority was to maintain the average annual housing requirement of 555 dwellings that was stated in the Core Strategy. It was expected that this would form a significant part of the Examination in Public that would be held for the Regeneration and Environment LDD next year.

A change since the previous report was the inclusion of an allowance for windfall sites. This related to small sites and further details were attached to the report.

It had been suggested that the windfall allowance should include provision for bringing empty homes back into uses. Empty properties were taken into account when determining the annual average housing requirement of 555 dwellings through a vacancy rate. There was a need for a certain number of vacant properties to allow for turnover in existing dwelling stock. Bringing properties back into use was part of the normal 'churn' in the housing market and distinct from additions to the dwelling stock as the properties already form part of the dwelling stock.

If bringing empty properties back into use were to be included in the five year supply assessment, then it would also be necessary to include properties becoming vacant over each 12 month period as the housing requirement was a 'net' requirement; that was to say it was net of demolitions and losses. This would be virtually impossible to monitor as whilst it was possible to monitor a snapshot of how many properties were vacant at any given point; a property could be vacant for 1 day, 1 month, 3 months, 3 years and so on.

However, a report would shortly be presented to Cabinet recommending approval for a funded programme to bring long-term empty properties back into use. This programme was intended to run for the lifetime of the New Homes Bonus as this would be, if approved, a definitive funded programme and therefore distinct from the normal churn in the housing market associated with empty properties, consideration was being given as to whether it would be robust to include a supply from this source in a future update of the five year supply assessment.

It was possible that the Review of Planning Practice Guidance led by Lord Taylor, due to report in July 2013, would comment on recommended best practice for carrying out five year supply assessments. If it did then the relevant comments will be taken into account at that point.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To ensure that Cabinet is fully briefed on the latest update of the five year deliverable housing supply.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Nelson declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 8 – Five Year housing Supply 2013 – 18 as he was a member of Tristar Board.

6. Details of any Dispensations

None

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight on Friday, 19th July 2013

Proper Officer
15 July 2013