

Executive

Housing Land Supply Position Statement

6 February 2012

Report of Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval of a Position Statement on Housing Land Supply and of active measures to increase housing supply, in view the current shortfall of deliverable housing sites as reported to the Executive on 6 December 2011.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) Approve the Housing Land Supply Position Statement for use as a material consideration in the determination of applications for planning permission for ten or more dwellings and in the handling of relevant planning appeals;
- (2) Authorise officers to undertake detailed pre-application discussions with interested promoters in the interests of identifying appropriate opportunities for addressing the housing land supply shortfall that accord with the principles set out in the Housing Land Supply Position Statement;
- (3) Authorise officers to work proactively with promoters and developers to ensure that all reasonable measures are taken for bringing forward and delivering appropriate sites within required timescales and for ensuring that developments are constructed to high standard;
- (4) Instruct officers to ensure that all reasonable opportunities are taken for bringing forward the delivery of sites already approved for new housing development but where development has either not yet commenced or where delivery has stalled;
- (5) Instruct officers to actively monitor housing supply and the delivery of specific sites, liaising with promoters and developers as required, and to ensure that the Planning Committee and Executive are informed of any significant change in circumstances.

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 Government policy requires Local Planning Authorities to maintain a continuous five-year supply of deliverable housing land. On 6 December 2011, an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) was approved by the Executive which concluded that the district had a supply of 2.8 years for the period 2011-2016 and 2.9 years for the period 2012-2017. This equates to a shortfall in each five-year period of just under 1600 homes.
- 1.2 Planning Policy Statement 3 (para' 71), requires planning applications to be considered favourably where a five-year supply cannot be demonstrated. The Draft National Planning Policy Framework proposes a continuation of the five year supply requirement and suggests that Local Planning Authorities will be expected to provide an additional 20% on top of their five year requirement to ensure choice and competition in the market for land.
- 1.3 A number of planning applications and planning appeals are already under consideration in the light of the five year land supply shortfall. Other pre-application discussions have taken place and a further number of promoters have expressed an interest in discussing proposals with officers. There is therefore a pressing need for the Council to set out it's position on how it intends to manage housing supply in the interests of increasing delivery and ensuring that development takes place in 'sustainable' locations and not on a sporadic basis in less sustainable locations.
- 1.4 A proposed Housing Land Supply Position Statement setting out how supply could be managed, and from where new deliverable housing sites might appropriately come forward, is presented at Appendix 1. Should Members be minded to approve the Position Statement it would be used as a material consideration in the consideration of relevant planning applications and appeals and would be presented in pre-application discussions.
- 1.5 The Statement seeks to uphold the urban focus of existing and emerging policy. It supports an approach of increasing the supply of deliverable sites in the most sustainable locations where services and facilities, jobs and public transport are most readily accessed, where the need for affordable housing is concentrated, and where there are significant opportunities for economic growth and the provision of new infrastructure which would benefit the wider community. The Statement looks to the most deliverable and Core Strategy compliant sites for meeting the land supply shortfall and strongly discourages the sporadic release of land in less sustainable rural areas where targeted opportunities for meeting local needs require further coordinated, consideration.
- 1.6 The Position Statement would be an important step in demonstrating that the Council is actively and positively looking to return to a five year land supply position. Together with the recommendations to proactively engage with the promoters and developers of sites and to bring appropriate sites forward, it would provide an important signal that the Council is taking management action now to secure a flexible, responsive supply of land.

Proposals

- 1.7 It is proposed that the Housing Land Supply Position Statement be approved and that the Council takes active management measures to increase housing supply in keeping with the approach set out in the Position Statement.

Conclusion

- 1.8 The Housing Land Supply Position Statement is required in view of the pressing need to actively manage the release of land for housing in the absence of a five-year supply of deliverable sites. Lack of clarity on the Council's position would increase the risk of development occurring in an uncoordinated way in less sustainable locations and of the Council's emerging Core Strategy being undermined.

Background Information

- 2.1 The objectives of the Housing Land Supply Position Statement are:
- i. to assist in monitoring and managing the district's housing land supply position so that the district returns to a five year land supply position;
 - ii. to provide contextual information and policy advice for development management decision-making in the interests of controlling the release of land in a sustainable way which accords with the evidence base for the emerging Core Strategy;
 - iii. to provide a clear understanding of the implications of the current land supply position and potential land releases which will contribute to the five year housing land supply and to the longer term housing trajectory where consistent with completion of the Core Strategy.
- 2.2 The Statement explains the district's housing land supply position, considers the local planning policy context and examines the potential for future supply having regard to issues such as sustainability, deliverability, community engagement and the opportunities for economic growth.
- 2.3 The approach to managing supply as summarised in the Position Statement is as follows:
- “...it is considered that until such time that the Core Strategy supersedes this position statement, or the district returns to a five-year land supply position (whichever is the sooner), the shortfall in housing supply would be most appropriately be met from the following sources:*
- i. development within the built-up areas of Banbury and Bicester*
 - ii. development on sites identified for residential development in the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011*
 - iii. development on sites identified for other mixed use development in the Non-Statutory Local Plan 2011 (as part of mixed use proposals)*

- iv. *extensions to the built-up areas of Banbury and Bicester which are demonstrably in accordance with or complementary to the emerging Core Strategy*
- v. *very limited development within the built-up areas of villages having regard to village categorisation policies.*

The following criteria should also be considered:

- i. *is there a five year supply requirement for additional housing?*
- ii. *is sufficient housing demonstrably deliverable by 31 March 2017?*
- iii. *would the proposed development undermine the continued preparation of the Core Strategy having regard to the scale of growth, the residual housing requirements, transportation issues, the mix of development and community aspirations?*

from PPS 3

- iv. *would the development contribute to creating mixed and sustainable communities?*
- v. *would the development be in a suitable location which offers a range of community facilities and with good access to jobs, key services and infrastructure?*
- vi. *would the development be easily accessible and well connected to public transport?*
- vii. *would the development make efficient and effective use of land?*
- viii. *would the proposal produce high quality housing which is integrated with, and complements, the neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally in terms of scale, density, layout and access?*
- ix. *would a mix of housing be achieved, both market and affordable?*
- x. *would the development be appropriately designed taking the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions?*
- xi. *would the proposal create or enhance a distinctive character that relates well to the surroundings?*

The assessment of whether proposed developments would be in suitable locations should also include consideration of the following:

- i. *landscape sensitivity and visual impact;*
- ii. *highways and traffic impact;*
- iii. *the need to avoid coalescence of settlements and to protect the identity of settlements;*
- iv. *settlement patterns;*
- v. *the impact of flood risk;*
- vi. *the impact on the historic environment;*
- vii. *the impact on ecology and biodiversity.*

Notwithstanding these considerations, the primary requirement will remain whether or not proposals are acceptable having regard to the statutory Development Plan and all other material considerations.”

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

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| Option One | To approve the Housing Supply Position Statement and the recommendations to actively manage an increase in the supply of deliverable housing sites |
| Option Two | To seek amendment of the Housing Supply Position Statement and recommended actions |
| Option Three | To take any actions required by the Executive having regard to the current housing land supply position |

Consultations

Lead Member for Planning (Cllr Michael Gibbard)	Informal Briefing
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Implications

Financial: No significant direct financial implications arising from this report. The work on monitoring and managing housing land supply is met within existing budgets. There are risks of costs associated with unsuccessfully defending refusals of planning permission upon appeal particularly if the decisions made as a result of this report are not considered to be well founded.

Comments checked by Karen Muir, Corporate Systems accountant, 01295 221559

Legal: The district's housing land supply position and the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) will often be material considerations in determining planning applications for residential development. The reasons for the refusal of planning permission need to be reasonable and capable of being substantiated upon challenge.

Comments checked by Nigel Bell, Team Leader – Planning and Litigation, 01295 221687

Risk Management: The district's housing land supply position and the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) will often be material considerations in determining planning applications for residential development. The reasons for the refusal of planning permission need to be reasonable and capable of being substantiated upon challenge. Not taking action to improve the housing land supply position would increase the risk of the Council being unsuccessful in defending planning appeals and the associated risk of costs being awarded against the Council.

Comments checked by Claire Taylor, Corporate Performance Manager, 0300 003 0113

Equalities

There are no equality issues arising from this report.

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Strategic Priorities

A District of Opportunity

Executive Lead Member

Councillor Michael Gibbard
Lead Member for Planning

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Housing Land Supply Position Statement
Background Papers	
None	
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