

Extract from the Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel

At 2.00 pm on Tuesday 29th June, 2021

Held virtually via Zoom

Present:-

Councillors:

Steven North (Chair)

David Brackenbury

David Jenney

Valerie Anslow

Barbara Jenney

Kevin Thurland

6 Housing Land Supply in North Northamptonshire

Simon Richardson, Development Manager, introduced the report which asked the Panel to consider the approach to maintaining a supply of deliverable housing land in North Northamptonshire.

The local planning authority was required to maintain a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of 5 years' worth of housing against its housing requirements. In the absence of a 5-year supply, the Council's development plan policies may be treated as out-of-date, which would make the area susceptible to speculative development pressures.

Housing requirements were set out in the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and applied until July 2021, when the JCS would be 5-years old and national policy stated that they should be superseded by a Local Housing Need (LHN) calculated using the Government's standard method. For North Northamptonshire, the current LHN was similar to the JCS housing requirement in all of the former local planning authority areas and resulted in a lower 5-year housing requirement in all areas except East Northamptonshire, where it was only marginally higher.

The Council now needed to make a choice between calculating housing land supply, post-July 2021, on a North Northamptonshire-wide basis, or based on the former local planning authority areas. Legal advice had been obtained which confirmed that either option was legally robust. Maintaining a 5-year supply of housing land at a North Northamptonshire level would provide greatest protection from speculative development proposals for the whole area.

During discussion on the report, Members were supportive of calculating housing land supply on a North Northamptonshire basis as there was little difference between the outputs for the two methods, however there was concern that this could change if the Government revised the formula going forward. Also, it was important to start thinking as a single unitary area rather than four separate councils. The importance of having an effective suite of development documents was reiterated and it would be important to review the JCS as soon as was practicable.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive that:

- (i) From 15th July 2021, in accordance with national policy, NNC should measure the five-year supply against the Local Housing Need (LHN) for the North Northamptonshire Housing Market Area (HMA), calculated using the Standard Method (as confirmed in Ministerial Statement dated 16th December 2020); and
- (ii) This approach should be reviewed annually to take account of changes in circumstances, including progress on the NN Strategic Plan and any changes to the standard method by which LHN is calculated.

Reason for recommendations – to agree an approach that is compliant with national policy and guidance and will provide greatest protection from speculative development proposals for the whole of the Council's area