

## Rother District Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Planning Committee
<b>Date:</b>	14 January 2021
<b>Title:</b>	Publication of Housing Land Supply Position Statement as at 1 April 2020
<b>Report of:</b>	Tim Hickling, Head of Service – Strategy and Planning
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To present the findings of the Housing Land Supply Position Statement (as at 1 April 2020) to Planning Committee and advise on how this impacts future planning decisions.
<b>Officer</b>	
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It be <b>RESOLVED</b> : That the report be noted.

---

### Introduction

1. The [Housing Land Supply Position Statement](#) identifies the supply of dwellings on sites that are allocated or have planning permission and allocations and shows the extent to which existing plans fulfil the requirement to maintain a rolling five year supply of deliverable land in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Position Statement meets the NPPF requirement to annually monitor housing delivery and it provides guidance to Planning Committee, Planning Officers, developers and interested parties on the current supply of deliverable sites. At the end of November 2020, the Council published its most recent version of the Position Statement detailing its housing land supply position as at 1 April 2020.

### Analysis

2. As the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy (CS) is now more than five years old, in accordance with the NPPF (2019), the Council must now measure its five-year housing land supply position against its '*minimum local housing need*' (LHN)<sup>1</sup>, defined using the new standard method calculation set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)<sup>2</sup>, until such time as a new target is established through the Plan-Making process<sup>3</sup>.
3. The calculation for determining the Housing Land Supply figure is set out in Figure 16 and Appendix 7 of the published Housing Land Supply Position Statement. It determines that as at 1 April 2020, the LHN figure for Rother is 736 dwellings per annum. The LHN calculation for Rother uses the prescribed inputs (based on household projections, affordability and any appropriate cap

---

<sup>1</sup> Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 68-005-20190722

<sup>2</sup> Housing and economic needs assessment, housing need section

<sup>3</sup> Please note that the PPG states that "*the standard method set out below identifies a minimum annual housing need figure. It does not produce a housing requirement figure*" [Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 2a-002-20190220].

to the LHN) in the standard methodology, it does not take into account any specific considerations to local circumstances or constraints which may mean these figures are unachievable. This will be considered through the plan-making process and tested at examination. This figure of 736 per annum is in sharp contrast to the CS figure of 484 dwellings per annum for this point in the Plan period<sup>4</sup>.

4. As of April 2020, the number of outstanding dwellings on large sites (6+ net dwellings) with planning permission is 2,551, which is an increase of some 220% from the April 2011 figure of 798. In addition, there are a further 272 outstanding dwellings on small sites (less than six net dwellings) with planning permission, making a total of 2,823 dwellings with planning permission (or with delegated approval subject to completion of a Section 106 agreement). This shows that there has been a marked increase in permitted sites since the beginning of Local Plan timeframe.
5. It should also be noted that analysis of actual completions within the District show that since the start of the CS plan period in April 2011, there have been 1,826 net additional dwellings completed (as at 1 April 2020); an average of only 203 dwellings per year. The annual housing requirement has not yet been achieved at any year during the plan period. More recently there is a general upward trend in the number of dwellings being completed each year whereby, completions have averaged some 229 dwellings per annum over the past three years, which is an increase of approximately 13% over the average for the plan period as a whole.
6. When housing delivery is viewed over a longer time period it is evident that completion rates tend to reflect the state of the housing market. Prior to 2008, when housing completions were much higher, the highest recorded figures were in 2006/07 and 2007/08 where over 400 homes were completed each year.
7. Due to the considerable uplift in the housing figure from the adopted CS target to the LHN figure set out in the PPG, the Council is only able to identify **2.87 years of housing supply**. Whilst the PPG is clear that the Council should use the LHN figure for the purposes of demonstrating its housing land supply position<sup>5</sup>, if the five-year housing land supply position were still measured against the outstanding CS requirement, then the Council would be able to demonstrate 4.36 years of housing land supply, an increase of 0.63 years since April 2019.

### **Implications of the lack of three-year supply**

8. The Council has previously considered the implications of a lack of a *five-year supply* at the meeting of its Cabinet on 6 June 2016<sup>6</sup>. That report indicated that the absence of a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites meant that the development boundaries and related restrictions on development in the countryside must be acknowledged as being 'out-of-date' (under paragraph 11 of the NPPF).

---

<sup>4</sup> The figure 484 takes into account any undersupply not provided for (dwellings not completed) in earlier years in the plan period.

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 68-005-20190722

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/12003/Monday-6-June-2016>

9. The general presumption in favour of sustainable development becomes a critical reference point when determining planning applications. It means that significant weight should generally be given to the benefits that additional housing supply would bring, although this will depend to some extent on local circumstances, including the impact on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), where relevant.
10. Therefore, the Council resolved that, pending the adoption of the Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan and outstanding Neighbourhood Plans (NP), sites that accord with the CS's overall development strategy and are suitable, deliverable and otherwise contribute to sustainable development, including circumstances where they are not within a development boundary, be considered favourably.
11. In the most basic terms, the adoption of the DaSA in December 2019 gives the most recent consideration to the suitability of development sites in the areas covered by that Plan. As set out in paragraph 4 above, if the Council could have continued with the target established through the CS then the Housing Land Supply position would have improved from 3.73 years to 4.36 years.
12. However, given that the Council can now only demonstrate a 2.87 years housing supply, there are further implications that both Planning Committee and officers need to be aware of. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that:

*“In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the NP is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided all of the following apply:*

  - a) *the NP became part of the development plan two years or less before the date on which the decision is made;*
  - b) *the NP contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement;*
  - c) *the Local Planning Authority has at least a three-year supply of deliverable housing sites (against its five-year housing supply requirement, including the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 73); and*
  - d) *the Local Planning Authority's housing delivery was at least 45% of that required over the previous three years.”*
13. As the Council can no longer demonstrate a three-year supply of deliverable housing, the general presumption in favour of sustainable development will now be a critical reference point when determining planning applications involving the provision of housing in Neighbourhood Areas that have a 'made' NP. This includes the NPs for Crowhurst, Rye, Salehurst and Robertsbridge, Sedlescombe and Ticehurst.
14. As the presumption in favour of sustainable development now applies to these 'made' NP areas, development is no longer constrained by policies in the adopted NP.

## The new Local Plan

15. National policy sets out that Local Plans should be reviewed every five years. The Council has commenced working on its new Local Plan, including developing the early evidence base documents and undertaking informal targeted early engagement with Members, Parish and Town Councils and NPs Groups in 2020. The Planning Policy Team have also prioritised producing an updated Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), including a 'call for sites' which ended in early December.
16. Prioritising the production of a new Local Plan will, via an independent Examination, establish the new housing target for the District (amongst other important elements), through the presentation of robust evidence to support the Local Plan. A timetable for production of the Local Plan will be published in early 2021.

## Environmental/Sustainability Implications

17. As the presumption in favour of sustainable development now applies across the entire District, where significant weight should generally be given to the benefits that additional housing supply would bring. This is not to say that the existing environmental considerations in the NPPF should be ignored and it is clear in this regard, however when determining individual planning applications, careful consideration must be made to the weight given to the benefits new housing can bring when considering the extent of local circumstances including the impact on the High Weald AONB and other nationally and internationally important designations.

## Conclusion

18. It is concluded that there is currently an insufficient supply of deliverable housing sites to meet the five-year housing land supply requirement in accordance with paragraph 73, or a three-year housing land supply in accordance with paragraph 14c of the NPPF.
19. As the Council can no longer demonstrate a three-year supply of deliverable housing, the general presumption in favour of sustainable development will now be a critical reference point when determining planning applications involving the provision of housing within the District, including Neighbourhood Areas that have a 'made' NP. Significant weight should generally be given to the benefits that additional housing supply would bring, although this will depend to some extent on local circumstances, including the impact on the High Weald AONB and other nationally and internationally important designations.

<b>Other Implications</b>	<b>Applies?</b>	<b>Other Implications</b>	<b>Applies?</b>
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	Yes	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	Yes	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

---

Chief Executive: Malcolm Johnston

---

Report Contact Officer: Tim Hickling – Head of Strategy and Planning

---

e-mail address: [tim.hickling@rother.gov.uk](mailto:tim.hickling@rother.gov.uk)

---

---

Appendices:	None
Relevant Previous Minutes:	None
Background Papers:	Housing Land Supply Position Statement as at 1 April 2020
Reference Documents:	National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance

---