

Mid Sussex District Plan Examination

Housing Matters: Hearing Sessions

Notes

It is not intended to re-visit some of the Inspector's questions; in some cases sufficient written information has been provided by the Council and other participants. Rather, the hearings will focus on the key issues of the components of the OAN, the calculation of the "policy on" requirement, the 5 year housing land supply, and the way forward in terms of site allocations and policies.

It is not intended to look in detail at sites that have not been allocated.

Allocated sites and commitments will be considered only in respect of the housing trajectory and the delivery of a 5 year housing land supply.

When business is finished on one topic, the hearing will move on (after an appropriate break) to the next. It is therefore expected that, as far as possible, all housing participants will be present for the whole session.

AGENDA

Day 1: Tuesday 29 November

Topic 1: Calculating the OAN (ie "policy off").

Issues:

1.1 The 714dpa starting point and the uplift to 730dpa for vacancy rates are generally accepted. But does the Plan make an adequate allowance for market signals, having regard to:

- a. Evidence on relative and absolute affordability and house prices
- b. Past rates of development
- c. Any other factor?

1.2 Is the 24dpa "market signals" uplift a demographic rather than a market signals adjustment? What degree of uplift is required from the starting point?

1.3 What is the level of affordable housing need and to what extent can it be accommodated within the proposed housing requirement?

1.4 What is a reliable range for projected jobs growth and to what extent does the proposed housing requirement support jobs growth?

1.5 In conclusion, what level of uplift is appropriate?

Day 2: Wednesday 30 November or earlier depending on progress

Topic 2: Calculating the overall housing requirement (ie "policy on")

2.1 The Council say that there is currently an unmet need for 38,558 homes from the Northern West Sussex and Sussex Coastal HMAs of which 34,863 is within the plan period. As regards Crawley, there is an unmet need, subtracting the portion taken by Horsham, of 185dpa. Has sufficient weight been given to this serious issue during the process of cooperation between Mid Sussex and other authorities? What further work might be required?

2.2 The Plan proposes an allowance of 782 dwellings (46dpa) towards unmet needs. Is this sound? If not, what other approach should the Plan take?

2.3 The primary constraints of the District are self-evident but a proportion of the District remains notably unconstrained in comparison with some other authorities. What demonstrable evidence is there of significant harm that would arise from a higher requirement than 800dpa?

2.4 Does the approach to sustainability assessment and site selection support the stance of the Council in regard to environmental capacity, having regard to:

- a. the equal weighting of all objectives
- b. the approach towards potential mitigation, either on-site or through CIL
- c. the approach to availability (the "circular argument")
- d. the fact that some sites identified as suitable by the SHLAA have not been brought forward?

Day 3: Thursday 1 December or earlier depending on progress

Topic 3: Delivery and the way forward

3.1 Can an overall housing trajectory be agreed, taking into account the latest predictions of delivery from the strategic sites?

3.2 Leaving aside questions of the OAN and housing requirement, what is the 5 year delivery position having regard to supply from all sources (this ought to be an agreed figure, or if not, the differences should be clearly highlighted and explained)?

3.3 Are neighbourhood plans likely to provide an adequate component of housing delivery in the district, and what is the realistic trajectory from them?

3.4 Is the strategic site threshold of 500 dpa right? Does it artificially constrain delivery by failing to give adequate consideration to mid-range sites above neighbourhood plan level but below strategic site level? Should the Plan lower the threshold for strategic sites to the level of some other plans to boost delivery?

3.5 Does the Plan's approach ensure that housing will be delivered in accordance with the preferred spatial strategy (as indicated in the SA)? Should the Plan contain a policy which puts some housing numbers to its spatial strategy to provide guidance for subsequent plan, including neighbourhood plans and the site allocations plan?

3.6 Are any other policy adjustments required to increase delivery – for example should the allowance for housing sites outside but adjoining settlement boundaries (currently 10 units across the board) be adjusted to take into account the size of the settlement?

3.7 Should the site allocations plan be brought forward?

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