

# Mid Sussex Site Allocations Plan

## Post Hearing Actions

- 1.1 This further examination statement has been prepared by Nexus Planning on behalf of Miller Homes Ltd in response to the Post Hearing Action Points.
- 1.2 Miller Homes control land south of Lewes Road, Haywards Heath (“the Site”) (SHELAA ref. 844). The Site measures approximately 5 hectares, is available for development now and has an indicative capacity of 100 dwellings.

### Action Point 3

#### MSDC 05b – Northern Arc

- 1.3 Miller Homes has reviewed the detailed commentary regarding Homes England track record in the delivery of complex strategic sites and note the contractual obligations regarding requirements for housebuilders to submit planning applications by certain deadlines. However, this does not of course extend to obligations regarding build out rates, which will be market-led, as with any other site. Accordingly, as per the submissions made in our Matter 3 Statement, there remains no clear evidence of how delivery rates well in excess of 200 dwellings per annum can be sustained from 2022/23 onwards.
- 1.4 Turing to the trajectory itself, Council document MSDC-01 outlined the delivery trajectory for DP9 as assumed in the District Plan in March 2018, with completions starting in 2019/20 and 3,500 dwellings delivered over the plan period. This document did however provide an update to the trajectory dated March 2021, stating that delivery wouldn’t commence until 2020/21 and that completions during the Plan period would only be 2,787 dwellings. MSDC-05b now provides a further update dated June 2021 i.e. only three months later from the previous update. This now shows that first completions are delayed by a further year until 2021/22 and overall completions during the Plan period have reduced even further to only 2,310 i.e. a loss of 477 dwellings to overall supply over the plan period in the space of 3 months. This is despite the Council contending that at the examination hearing sessions that its delivery assumptions for the Northern Arc were robust.
- 1.5 The Council suggest that the figure of 2,310 dwellings to be delivered over the Plan period was taken into account in the housing trajectory to support the Site Allocations DPD and the Housing Land Supply Paper ref. H2 however, this conflicts with the contents of MSDC-01, which was of course prepared after these documents.

- 1.6 It would appear that this significant further reduction in supply over the remainder of the Plan period is being addressed via, inter alia, increased delivery from existing commitments. However, Millers Homes consider that substantial uncertainty still remains regarding what the actual trajectory for DP9 is given that every time an update is requested, the first completions are pushed back and the trajectory reduced. This only serves to support the submissions made by Millers Homes and many other parties at the examination hearing sessions that the delivery assumptions for DP9 cannot robustly be relied upon and should be reduced.
- 1.7 Accordingly, it is clear that a cautious approach to delivery assumptions for DP9 should be adopted, in line with the submissions made in our Matter 3 Statement. This will require the allocation of additional sites to ensure that the Plan has sufficient flexibility to ensure that the minimum housing requirement set out in the District Plan can be delivered over the plan period.

#### Action Point 4

##### MSDC-06a – 5 Year Housing Land Supply

- 1.8 For the reasons set out in our response to MSDC-06a (and our Matter 3 Examination Statement), we do not consider that the delivery rates relating Phase 1 Northern Arc, Burgess Hill (SHELAA ID 493) are realistic and should be revised down to no more than 200 dwellings per annum, removing 207 dwellings from the five year supply figures for this site alone.

##### MSDC-06b – Housing Land Supply Trajectory

- 1.9 The Council now suggests that it now has a total over supply of 937 dwellings, having regard to additional completions, updated commitments and an increase to the windfall allowance.
- 1.10 However, as outlined earlier, we consider that delivery rates associated with the Northern Arc (DP9), remain too optimistic and as set out in our Matter 3 Statement, should be reduced to no more than 200 dwellings per annum from the year 2022/23 onwards, in line with the evidence outline in the Lichfields Report titled *'Start to Finish: How Quality do Large-Scale Housing Sites Deliver?'*.
- 1.11 Whilst we note that the Council contend that the presence of Homes England will ensure that the assumed trajectory will be achieved, it remains the case that even in this context, the trajectory has materially reduced in the space of only 3 months and Homes England cannot influence market forces in terms of the timescales for housebuilders delivering houses for occupation and buyers purchasing such properties.
- 1.12 Given the above, and even with the Council's further reduced trajectory, our suggested change to the trajectory would reduce supply from this site alone by 454 dwellings over the Plan period. This will however ensure that the Plan is based upon realistic delivery assumptions.
- 1.13 The Council's suggested over supply of 937 dwellings provides a buffer of 9% against the residual District Plan requirement (albeit we do not accept the figures used to support this). Whilst this represents an improvement, if it is to be based upon the extremely optimistic and in all likelihood undeliverable assumptions for DP9, a buffer of more than our previously advocated figure of 10% against the residual District requirement is required. Indeed, in this context, we would suggest 15% would be justified.

**Briefing Note** continued

- 1.14 Alternatively, and more appropriately, we would suggest that the delivery assumptions for DP9 are reduced in line with our earlier submissions.
- 1.15 In either scenario, additional allocations would be required to ensure that the Plan has sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change and overall robustness to provide confidence that the residual District Plan requirement can be met over the Plan period.