



Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Plan Review Examination

Matter 7: Monitoring & Review

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MATTER 7: MONITORING & REVIEW

Policy DS7 – Monitoring of housing delivery

Q174. If housing delivery rates fail to meet the targets set out within the Plan, are the actions set out within the policy sufficient to ensure that the required housing delivery is provided during the Plan period?

Q175. Are the 4 bullet point actions set out within the policy intended to be ranked in order of preference? Is the policy sufficiently clear in this regard?

- 1.1.1 The proposed main modifications to Policy DS7 (CD21, page 14) set out several actions that the Council will implement to resolve any shortfalls in housing delivery and now clarifies that the listed actions are to be considered sequentially, with most weight being given to working with developers and site promoters on the allocated sites, and least weight being given to the delivery of edge of settlement sites in the rural areas beyond the defined settlement boundaries.
- 1.1.2 Taken together, the measures proposed in Policy DS7 are a sensible approach to combat any housing delivery shortfall. That said, the sequential approach proposed will render the policy ineffective and only serve to exacerbate rather than resolve any shortfalls in housing delivery. Consequently, Policy DS7 as drafted is not justified, nor is it effective.
- 1.1.3 In the event that housing delivery rates are falling short of the targets set out within the Plan, it would be necessary for the Council to implement a comprehensive package of measures to ensure that this issue is addressed as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- 1.1.4 We outlined the constraints in our Regulation 19 representation associated with the timeframes and uncertainties regarding negotiations around infrastructure, viability and phasing¹. Moreover, there is already an effective presumption in favour of

¹ CD14 representation reference 111.6.

development within the settlement boundary and as such the criteria does not serve to boost the supply of land for sites.

- 1.1.5 It is not clear or justified how each of the stages '*...have been fully explored, and sustainable sites have not been identified*' in order to progress to the next stage of finding sites adjacent to the settlement boundary.
- 1.1.6 The policy will be ineffective at bringing about new sites in a quick and efficient manner and should be substantially redrafted such that all opportunities can be considered through the development management process simultaneously. This is the only mechanism that will enable the supply of land for housing to be delivered effectively through the planning system.
- 1.1.7 To this end, Gladman contend that the policy should be amended to confirm that all the listed actions, including the delivery of additional housing focused on sustainable edge of settlement sites, would be considered of equal weight in addressing any shortfalls. Ultimately granting planning permission for additional new homes is likely to be one of the most effective ways to address any under-delivery of housing, particularly in the short to medium term, and this should not be viewed as a 'back-up' measure but rather a fundamental action to remedy any housing shortfall.
- 1.1.8 The need to combat any shortfalls in housing delivery as quickly as possible must be seen in the context of the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) given by the Deputy Prime Minister, and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Angela Rayner on 30 July 2024, in addition to the on-going consultation on proposed revisions to the Framework and other changes to the planning system.
- 1.1.9 The WMS reaffirms that the country is in "*the most acute housing crisis in living memory*" and is clear in its conclusion that "*there is no time to waste. It is time to get on with building 1.5 million homes*". These are now material consideration for this examination and clearly set the tone and direction of the newly elected Government. The amendment to Policy DS7 suggested above would wholly accord with the Governments clear indication that sustainable developments are to be supported to enable housing delivery as quickly as possible.

Policy DS8 – Review

Q176. Is the policy sufficiently clear and responsive in setting out under what circumstances a full or partial review of the Plan would be triggered?

Q177. Does the policy need to be more explicit about what evidence and what level of change would be required regarding housing and employment need in order to trigger a review?

Q178. Does the policy have sufficient regard to and set out the approach to dealing with the possibility of unmet housing and employment need arising in the housing market area/region?

1.1.10 Policy DS8 as currently proposed does not define with clear stages and timing, the areas and process that will trigger a review of this Plan. It is too vaguely written and therefore inconsistent with the approach required by paragraph 16(d) of the Framework which requires policies to be clearly written and unambiguous.

1.1.11 As set out in our Matter 3 Hearing Statement, in the event that the Plan proceeds on the basis of not addressing the key strategic matter of unmet housing needs now, Policy DS8 must be amended to explicitly state a review would be triggered should Coventry City Council, or indeed any other authority within the C&WHMA for that matter, identify unmet housing needs. The amendment to the policy should also commit to a clearly defined timescale to ensure this key strategic matter is dealt with as quickly as possible.

1.1.12 In considering any amendments to Policy DS8, we would also draw to the Inspectors attention the following statement in the WMS from the Secretary of State;

"In pursuit of that goal, we therefore propose to take a pragmatic approach to the interaction between the changes we have set out today, and the fact that local authorities across England will have local plans at various stages of development. In practice, this means that:

- *for plans at examination, allowing them to continue, **although where there is a significant gap between the plan and the new local housing need***

figure, we will expect authorities to begin a plan immediately in the new system" (emphasis added).

1.1.13 The new local housing figure referenced in the above statement is the outcome of the proposed new stock-based Standard Method for calculating local housing need which, for Nuneaton & Bedworth, establishes a revised local housing need of 774dpa.

1.1.14 The next step is whether this constitutes a 'significant gap' which necessitates the Council to being an immediate review of the Plan under the new system. Paragraph 227 of the Framework consultation document provides guidance on this matter:

"local plans that reach adoption with an annual housing requirement that is more than 200 dwellings lower than the relevant published Local Housing Need figure will be expected to commence plan-making in the new plan-making system at the earliest opportunity to address the shortfall in housing need."

1.1.15 The Council's proposed housing requirement of 545dpa is 229dpa lower than the published Local Housing Need figure of 774dpa. It therefore follows that an immediate review is required in alignment with the Government's proposed changes to reflect expected requirements under the proposed method for calculating housing need. It is also pertinent to note that the matter of unmet housing need emanating from Coventry City also remains under the Government's proposed approach.

1.1.16 Whilst it is acknowledged that this Plan is being examined against the provisions of the September 2023 Framework, it is almost certain that it will be adopted at a point in time when an updated Framework comes into force. The WMS and proposed changes to the Framework clearly indicate the direction of travel being advocated by the Government and, of direct relevance to this matter, confirm that Nuneaton and Bedworth will be expected to immediately review their Plan in the new plan-making system to address the significant shortfall in housing need.

1.1.17 Based on the above it is clear that Policy DS8 requires modification to the considered sound. The following policy wording, which has been formulated based on the 30-month timeframe for planning authorities to prepare and adopt a local plan under

the proposed new system of plan-making², is put forward for the Inspectors consideration:

"The Council will undertake a review of the Local Plan, which will commence no later than four months after the adoption of the plan. An updated or replacement plan will be submitted for examination no later than 30 months after the date of adoption of the plan.

In the event that this submission date is not adhered to, the policies in this Local Plan for the supply of land will be deemed to be 'out of date' in accordance with paragraph 11 d) of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The plan review will secure levels of growth that accord with government policy, serve to build stronger working relationships with adjoining and nearby authorities and accommodate any apportionment of unmet housing and employment needs that have been agreed."

Monitoring General

179. Does the Plan have clear and effective mechanisms for monitoring?

- 1.1.18 No, as above there is no clear mechanism to understand what reviews will be undertaken and when.
- 1.1.19 It is not clear to the reader of the Plan what is required and currently it is only within the Council's behest as when it considers it has explored any necessary options. This is not clear, justified or effective.

² The proposal is part of the government's July 2023 consultation on the implementation of plan-making reforms which indicates that LPAs will be required to prepare and adopt a plan within 30 months