



APPENDIX 3: HOUSING SUPPLY

in respect of
Land to the Rear of Baldwin Road, Kidderminster
on behalf of
Barberry (Hurcott) Ltd

25 November 2020
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a supplementary note to our response to the Matters and Questions November 2020, on behalf of Barberry (Hurcott) Limited.

In this document, we raise some concerns over the council's assumptions on housing land supply and in particular, short term supply during the first 5 years of the plan.

1. Housing Land Supply

- 1.1. The Council published a 5 Year Housing Land Supply Statement (ED10), together with supporting Appendices (ED10A), together with and Engagement Statement (ED12) and a high level indicative trajectory (ED11).
- 1.2. We have reservations about a number of sites included in the short term delivery bracket, which would (in our view) not deliver sufficient affordable housing, even at the lower 25% policy requirement and that could take some time to bring forward, potentially pushing them beyond 2026 (years 5/6+).
- 1.3. The Housing Delivery Test, brought in last year is clearly a 'backward looking' tool where council's would typically look at past performance as a measure of housing delivery, rather than the housing land supply calculation (which may be soon to disappear as a result of the Planning White Paper 2020).
- 1.4. In Wyre Forest, the annualised delivery rates have been measured against a very low requirement, which originated within the now abolished West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. As such, the council are at pains to point out their success (115%) in this regard, but we contend this is against a very low base and is meaningless when faced with the requirement to 'boost significantly' the supply of housing and 'build, build, build' as promoted by the government.
- 1.5. We note the council's claim of a 5.6 year housing land supply, as at 1st April 2021 (the council's assumed plan adoption), but we consider this to be a precarious position in light of the number of previously developed sites they are reliant upon in their plan.
- 1.6. Looking at delivery rates for the District (Picture 37.1, Page 272 of the Submission Plan) between the 2016/17 and 2019/20 monitoring years, it is clear that the council have invariably failed to achieve an average annualised delivery rate of more than 197 dwellings.
- 1.7. The council's trajectory during years 2020/21 (550 dwellings), climbing to 650 dwellings in 2022/23 clearly show a massive step-change in sustained delivery required for 2021 to 2032.
- 1.8. The original local plan submission document (October 2018 – LPP18) contained similar allocations, but at lower delivery rates. We therefore fail to see how the council can justify simply increasing their trajectory without adding substantially more sites to improve delivery, competition in the land market and subsequently reduce the risk of not achieving the objectives of the plan.
- 1.9. Further, we do not consider that the lead-in time for a number of large sites has been adequately considered by the council and this is evident from the council's approach to assumed delivery from their proposed allocations.
- 1.10. We are aware that the Lea Castle site took over three years from the submission of the outline planning application to the determination of the reserved matters in May this year, and this was led, (in the main) by Homes England, where (arguably) they would have been in a better position to work more closely with the council.
- 1.11. Therefore, how the council will deal with inevitable local opposition for commercially-led schemes by mainstream housebuilders elsewhere remains to be seen, but there are clearly a significant number of unresolved objections to the strategic sites proposed around the district that are likely to translate into public objection on a large scale in some cases.

- 1.12. On behalf of our mutual clients, Tetlow King have also produced a note (Appendix 1) focussing on affordable housing delivery, which should be read in parallel with our submissions detailing how the council is failing to act on affordable housing delivery.
- 1.13. We share concerns over viability issues on a number of brownfield sites around the district, including the following:
- 1.14. Carpets of Worth, Stourport (Allocation AKR/20) (134 dwellings) – longstanding vacant site, which is as yet unsold to Barratt Homes, significant contamination and other site ‘abnormals’ issues and unlikely to deliver the full range of planning gain, including affordable housing. Various developers have over the years attempted to bring the site forward, but it has proven to be too difficult. No planning permission in place, but still forms part of the council’s short term supply. There is now a live application on the site, however the S106 has yet to be negotiated and permission yet to be granted.
- 1.15. Land at Baldwin Road, Stourport (Allocation MI/5) (40-50 dwellings) – currently owned by a company registered in Hong Kong and (apparently) being partly developed by Biran Homes – a company who did not exist until June this year. The allocation includes land which is still currently occupied by commercial organisations, which we have observed as being active on the site in the last week and yet is supposed to form part of the council’s short term supply. We do not consider this will deliver the full range of dwellings within the first 5 years of the plan as it would require active commercial businesses to leave the site.
- 1.16. Former Petrol Station, Chester Road South, Kidderminster (Allocation AS/3) (10 dwellings) – longstanding brownfield site which has been cleared, but no housebuilder in place (owned by Kalsi Properties Ltd) and yet supposed to form part of short term supply. Clearly site abnormalities associated with remediation of former petrol station, together with potential underbuild issues (retaining walls) likely to result in viability issues. Current permission expires in Feb 2021.
- 1.17. St Wulstan’s Church Hall, Vale Road, Stourport (7 dwellings) – the site has been sold recently, but the new owners need access to an easement which is controlled by the former owners the Diocese. This is effectively a ransom strip. Planning permission expires in February 2021.
- 1.18. Alton Works, Rock (21 dwellings) – still no S106 signed, the application is only in outline and no onsite affordable housing being provided. Committee (resulting in resolution to grant) was held in November 2017, this has taken 3 years so far and still no permission in place. Site not owned by a housebuilder (Bewdley Commercial Centre Limited).
- 1.19. For the reasons given, we consider there is significant risk to the delivery of around 222 dwellings contributing to the council’s short term supply, if they were delayed or faced ongoing issues such as viability negotiations, which can be protracted. This is just a snapshot of a small number of previously developed sites that have, in our view, serious viability issues.
- 1.20. This could leave the council in a position where they do not have a demonstrable 5 year supply at adoption of the plan, using the calculations set out in Table 14 of ED10.
- 1.21. In response to the Inspector’s question 8, the council issued a revised indicative trajectory (ED11) which set out which of the allocations would deliver in each part of the plan period on a generalised basis. This is not broken down on an annualised basis, demonstrating how it would relate to the trajectory at Picture 37.1. We remain unconvinced that the delivery rates (certainly in the short term) are remotely achievable at this stage for the reasons already given.

- 1.22. We consider there are implications for the assumed trajectory for the first phase of the plan and this should be explored further – identifying what delivery would look like in the event there were further delays to the riskiest sites the council currently rely on.