

YORKSHIRE LAND

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Planning Policy Team

Regeneration and Property

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

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BARNSLEY

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By Post & Email to

localplanconsultation@barnsley.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

BARNSLEY LOCAL PLAN – MODIFICATIONS CONSULTATION 2018
YORKSHIRE LAND Limited - CONSULTEE ID: 23082

Our consultant, Mr Paul Butler of PB Planning has submitted separate detailed representations on our behalf, including a comprehensive analysis of the Councils housing trajectory. We have therefore sought to keep this representation brief to avoid repetition.

Development in the Villages

With regards to development in Oxspring, we support the Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's (the Council's) decision to withdraw sites EC6 & EC7 adjacent to Sheffield Road, following comments made by Historic England. We would however reiterate the contents of our earlier submissions to the Local Plan Examination, which identify that there are several further constraints which would severely restrict the delivery of housing at these sites.

It is evident that where the Council had identified housing allocations in the Western Rural Villages through the Local Plan Examination Consultation Process (January to March 2018) in an attempt to address the issues in the Inspector's Interim Findings Report and a number of those sites have since been rejected by the Local Plan Inspector, the identified need for housing in those locations (and other western villages) still exists and deliverable replacement sites should now be identified to meet those needs and satisfy the Inspectors concerns.

The identification of suitable and deliverable sites (such as Oxspring Fields and Millstones

Oxspring) will ensure the deliverability of housing across a mix of tenures, including Affordable homes and also larger family homes, which are much needed in the western villages, particularly in Oxspring where an independent Housing Needs and Capacity Study has been prepared on behalf of the Parish Council, identifying the need for new homes.

With regard to the requirement set out within the Inspectors letter post the Stage Four Examination Hearings dated 24 May 2018, that the Council should deliver 1469 homes per annum in the five years following adoption of the Local Plan, ourselves and PB Planning have given careful consideration to and undertaken a detailed analysis of the updated Housing Trajectory supplied by the Council.

The Modifications proposed by the Council have not sought to take account of the comments we made at the Stage Four Examination Hearings in respect of the failings of the Green Belt Review, particularly regarding employment site P2 and our site at Millstones, Oxspring where the Green Belt Review identifies the site as being situated within the development limits of the village and therefore provides no evidence which demonstrates why the site should not be released from the Green Belt.

As is identified in our statement to Main Matter 19 of the Local Plan Examination, we believe that BMBC's approach to the identification of allocations within the Borough's Villages has resulted in a flawed assessment of reasonable alternatives.

Our site interest at Millstones, Oxspring has been submitted to BMBC for their consideration as a potential housing land allocation throughout the entire local plan process and specific, substantial, evidence of the deliverability of the site was submitted to BMBC on the 19th August 2016 by Peter Brett Associates. This evidence is enclosed within the MM20 Hearing Statement of PB Planning.

The emerging Local Plan provides the ideal opportunity to make a slight adjustment to the settlement boundary in order to remove this site from the Green Belt. On account of the evidence we have submitted, we believe there is compelling evidence to justify the release of the Millstones site. Furthermore, at a meeting with the Council's Head of Planning, Mr Joe Jenkinson, during October 2017 which was also attended by PB Planning and the Council's Head of Development Service, Mr David Shepherd, Mr Jenkinson confirmed to us that the Millstones site was suitable and could come forward for housing development.

Housing Trajectory

Whilst we have been in close discussions with our advisers, we have relied upon our consultant, Mr Butler of PB Planning to present an analysis of the Housing Trajectory in a detailed format within his representations, in essence it is apparent from the trajectory that

the quantum of homes identified to be required by the Local Plan Inspector will not be delivered.

It is clear from the Housing Trajectory that the Council are reliant upon a number of large allocations to deliver the homes required in the first years of the Local Plan post adoption, many of these sites are located in areas recognised by the Council as demonstrating weak and at times failing housing markets. This is confirmed within paragraph 9.31 of the Local Plan. We have provided evidence in our earlier submissions referencing this matter.

From our own considerable experience of the industry over the last three decades and in particular of the housing market in Barnsley, we do not accept that private sector developers will have the confidence to compete with other developers on these sites on the scale which will be required in order for the Council to meet the necessary housing targets. Indeed, the lack of developers promoting sites in these weak and failing market areas throughout the Local Plan Examination in Public is further evidence that these sites will not deliver the homes which are required for the plan to be a success.

Small, Regional and National housebuilders are not social housing providers, although Policy H8 of the Local Plan sets out the affordable housing requirements in the Borough. They are speculative businesses responding to market needs and have a purpose to return profits for shareholders. The outlay expended on land, infrastructure and construction costs are by nature considerable, and these businesses therefore have to act prudently in order to sell their product and generate profits on considerable financial outlay. Where there is doubt on the saleability of homes in certain locations, developers will naturally take a cautious approach. As set out above, the Council itself has identified that parts of the Borough demonstrate weak and at times failing housing markets. Whilst developers can cope with competition where the market area is strong, they are unlikely to compete for customers in areas recognised as having a weak and failing housing market - Why would they?

If a number of sites were to come forward in a weak housing market area, the number of completions per site, per annum would be greatly below the projections anticipated by the Council and identified in the Housing Trajectory. We are aware that in some parts of North Yorkshire where the housing market is much stronger than in Barnsley, it is estimated and accepted that an annual delivery of 35 homes per site, per annum is realistic. The Council have identified a higher annual delivery rate within the housing trajectory for Barnsley.

In contrast, it is apparent from evidence submitted to the Local Plan Examination that the housing supply will be boosted if the Council identify sufficient deliverable allocations in the stronger housing market areas within the Borough, particularly in the larger western villages including: Oxspring, Silkstone Common, Silkstone, Thurgoland and Hoylandswaine.

The allocation of housing sites in these village locations in the west of the Borough will also satisfy the requirement identified by the Inspector within the Interim Findings Report dated 15 August 2017, that the Council should take a more positive approach to the role of the

Boroughs villages. In meeting this requirement, the Council would also ensure a greater delivery of the larger family homes which are identified as being required to deliver upon the Economic Strategy, as well as providing Affordable homes (in accordance with Local Plan Policy H8) in areas which are identified by the Council within its evidence to the Local Plan Examination to have the greatest need.

We have provided robust evidence within our previous representations to demonstrate that there are developers eagerly awaiting the opportunity to develop housing at the earliest opportunity in the stronger market locations in the Borough.

Considering the number of sites which have been rejected by the Local Plan Inspector following the Stage Four Examination Hearings in the villages of Cawthorne and Silkstone Common, together with the Housing and Safeguarded Land sites withdrawn by the Council in Oxspring (reference EC6 & EC7) we do not believe that the Inspector's requirement, identified within the Interim Findings Report, that the Council should take a more positive approach to the role of the Borough's villages, has been met. This is a matter considered in the recent Legal Opinion provided by Leading Counsel, Sasha White QC which was submitted to the Head of Planning and the Local Plan Inspector by PB Planning on 11 July 2018.

The Council has not been able to demonstrate a five year land supply of deliverable sites for a number of years now and we therefore believe that the Council need to listen carefully to what private sector partners, who are needed to execute upon the Local Plan, are telling the Council. What we are telling the Council aligns with its own analysis of the Borough contained within a number of high level background papers and evidence based documents.

To coin a phrase used by our consultant, Mr Butler of PB Planning:

"If you do what you have always done, you will get what you have always got."

The Council must now set the appropriate policies and crucially, identify the most suitable site allocations, for the Local Plan to be delivered upon successfully by the private sector and thereby for the Councils economic objectives, which have been the driving force behind this development plan, to be achieved.

The identification of further suitable and deliverable housing and employment land allocations in the western villages, within a further round of modifications to the Local Plan, would not fundamentally change the basis of the Spatial Strategy underpinning the Local Plan, with the main focus for new housing and employment development continuing to be within Urban Barnsley and the Principal Towns.

Hunningley Lane

In this regard, following the conclusion of Stage Four Examination Hearings, the Local Plan Inspector has rejected the inclusion of Site EC1 at Staincross Common (669 dwellings)

which results in deficit in indicative yield of 439 dwellings within Urban Barnsley when taking account of the re-allocation of site UB16 from employment to housing status, to provide 230 dwellings. Furthermore, Housing Site Allocation H73 at Darley Cliff, Worsborough is included within the Local Plan with a significantly reduced site area than was originally identified within the Draft Local Plan, which results in an even greater deficit in dwellings previously identified to be delivered within Urban Barnsley.

Considering that the Council considered Exceptional Circumstances existed to release at least 669 additional homes in Urban Barnsley as recently as January this year, we believe these exceptional circumstances continue to exist and that additional deliverable sites which are suitable to replace the yield lost from rejected sites located in Urban Barnsley should be identified where they are available.

Our site at Hunningley Lane, Worsbrough in Urban Barnsley is a suitable and deliverable site, with no technical or ownership constraints and strong developer interest from several National housebuilders, which is capable of delivering a minimum of 329 new homes, as illustrated on the layout prepared by Persimmon Homes (see Appendix 1).

Inclusion of the Hunningley Lane site as an additional housing land allocation within the Local Plan will secure a deliverable site, in the heart of Urban Barnsley, which can provide homes (subject to planning approval) within the first twelve to eighteen months post adoption of the Local Plan, making an important contribution to the housing targets which are required in the first five years following the adoption of the Local Plan.

Employment Land

Given Penistone's role as the principal service centre for the Western Area of the Borough we believe additional sites need to be allocated in order to ensure that the supply of viable employment land and infrastructure is sufficient to sustain and enhance the economy of the Western Area of the Borough up to the end of the Barnsley Local Plan Period in 2033.

We have submitted a multitude of robust supporting evidence in previous representations in respect of our proposals for the Blackmoor Business Park at Oxspring. The site is previously developed with access to public transport and also to the Trans Pennine Trail, which provides access by cycle from the Principal Town of Penistone with a journey time of approximately 10 minutes. The site is suitable to meet the employment needs of Penistone and the western villages during the Local Plan Period, particularly considering that evidence was included in the Councils Examination Hearing Statements which identifies that the only other employment site identified to meet needs in this part of the Borough (reference: P2) is a poorly scoring site which will not come forward until at least 10 years into the Local Plan Period. Crucially, neither a developer, the landowner nor an agent has promoted site P2 for development at any stage throughout the Local Plan Examination in Public.

Site Ref. P2 cannot currently be justified as a deliverable employment land allocation. It is a Green Belt site which has not been assessed for release within the Arup Green Belt review

and there are also a number of factors which will affect the scale of development at the site, including access constraints (low bridges) and the presence of two large electric pylons carrying high voltage cables which hang low over the site. Policy P2 of the Local Plan identifies the delivery constraints associated with the electricity pylons, alongside several other constraints.

In addition to the above, we also believe that the field shape, topography and contours of the site will be an additional constraint to the development of the site. The proposed Blackmoor Business Park development can be considered a deliverable employment allocation on account of evidence identified within the MM10 Statement submitted to the Local Plan Examination by PB Planning.

Given Penistone's role as the principal service centre for the Western Area of the Borough we believe additional sites need to be allocated in order to ensure that the supply of viable employment land and infrastructure is sufficient to sustain and enhance the economy of the Western Area of the Borough up to the end of the Barnsley Local Plan Period in 2033

Conclusion

The Local Plan Examination in Public has been underway for eighteen months to date and whilst there has been progress made during the Examination Process, for the compelling reasons identified in this submission and also the representations submitted on our behalf by PB Planning, we feel further modifications are required, including the identification of replacement and additional housing and employment land allocations in the villages and deliverable housing sites with developer interest to make up the shortfall in Urban Barnsley, before the Local Plan can be found sound.

Yours faithfully

YORKSHIRE LAND Limited

APPENDIX 1



Hunningley Lane, Worsbrough

Illustrative Layout

Gross: 29.5 acres

Nett: 20.4 acres

329 Dwellings

