

While Bath Preservation Trust does not expect to appear at the hearing on 10-11 December, and we fully understand the clarification made by the Inspector in para 3.35 of ID42, I am making the following submission on the Trust's behalf which relates inter alia to question 3.33 of ID42.

*3.33 The Council has increased the housing requirement from its assessment of objective need/demand plus local plan backlog in order to deliver the additional affordable housing needed. On what basis does the Council consider that this additional market-led housing will be delivered, given that it is more than its assessment of need/demand?*

1. We note that housing calculations are not easy for lay audiences (who make up the majority affected by planning decisions) fully to understand. The publication of the proposed amendments to the Core Strategy on 11 November 2013 (in particular CSA14) combined a restatement of the housing figures with delineation of green belt sites for housing. This has drawn to the attention of wider audiences, for the first time in an understandable way not buried in supporting evidence documents, that the B&NES housing need, in the case of market housing, is expected to be well exceeded in the trajectory of the Core Strategy, and that B&NES proposes to deliver considerably in excess of their required target of market houses in order to 'facilitate' the supply of affordable housing which otherwise risks falling short of target. It is to achieve this aim that B&NES proposes to build in the Green Belt.
2. The Council's calculations are based on the actual % of affordable housing planned on sites already with permission, together with an assumption that they can deliver their target % (either 30% or 40% affordable depending on site, but no more) on future sites. The figures are set out clearly in an email received by me from a B&NES officer on request for clarification, the content of which is appended to this submission.
3. The Council presumably had a choice as to whether provision of land supply in the Green Belt and AONB for this excess market housing was appropriate, or whether on the other hand they could find other ways to increase the affordable provision on land not yet agreed or developed. We are not aware of any indication that they considered other options than releasing green belt land though we accept there may be some in the supporting evidence which we have not yet identified.
4. The Inspector's question relates to whether the market housing is likely to be delivered since it is in excess of need. As we have argued elsewhere, demand for market housing in Bath is always high because of its perceived attractiveness for second home owners, holiday lets and buy-to-let investment, little of which serves housing need. This in turn pushes up land values which then leads developers to present a case that the imposition of significant affordable housing percentages renders sites to be uncommercial.



5. The Inspector will no doubt hear from developers' representatives who wish to exploit the demand for market housing in Bath by arguing that still more market houses should be built, above assessed need and even above B&NES' own figures. It is in their interests to argue that the affordable percentages are unlikely to be delivered given Bath's land values, because the consequence would be to insist that yet more land is released for market housing, for which there is an economic demand unrelated to actual housing need or jobs provision. But such development is not in the interest of appropriate planned development for Bath.
6. We would answer the Inspector's question therefore that the market housing is likely to be delivered but question, in turn, whether an over-provision of market housing on expensive land is the best way to guarantee provision of affordable housing, and (at the next stage of the examination) whether releasing Green Belt for this excess market housing is justifiable.
7. We would argue that the decision to overprovide market housing is not the only or the most effective or responsible way to deliver the affordable targets. B&NES is obliged to consider such alternatives under NPPF 116, for example:
  - Finding land to provide 100% affordable developments, possibly using some of B&NES own city centre (and therefore highly sustainable) property portfolio to supply suitable sites.
  - Requiring land owners to accept higher affordable percentages than 35 to 40%; and certainly not permitting any more development at under this percentage; if necessary by reducing other S106 contribution requirements.
  - Increasing the lower densities that are proposed for the brownfield sites in Bath.
  - Encouraging the use of and facilitating the conversion of the large number of empty flats that exist above shops in Bath, often in B&NES own property portfolio.
  - Approaching neighbouring towns in West Wiltshire that have good rail travel links into Bath and which already form part of Bath's commuter area to see if they can help with sites and therefore giving meaning to the duty to cooperate in relation to Wiltshire, which is not part of the West of England Partnership and therefore risks being excluded from the 2016 review.
8. If the Inspector is minded to insist that yet more market housing over and above need is required for Bath to deliver affordable targets, we would request that he consider the distorted nature of the Bath housing market and whether or not encouraging its growth beyond market need represents truly plan-led development. If the SHMA target is raised beyond the 8727, B&NES has no incentive to consider these other options for meeting the challenge of their affordable targets.
9. At the subsequent hearings of the Examination we will seek to argue that the harm caused by the allocation of green belt land, largely for the provision of excess market housing, outweighs the benefits delivered, for reasons relating to the



purposes of the Green belt, AONB and World Heritage Site setting. At this stage we simply want to put a marker down that we question the that additional market housing is the only means of securing the affordable housing shortfall, which in turn increases the housing delivery requirement to numbers far in excess of the objectively assessed need.

**Caroline Kay, Chief Executive  
for Bath Preservation Trust  
21 November 2013**

Appendix: Email received by C Kay from B&NES planning office entitled 'Key Data re housing figures'

| 10.        | SHMA over 20 years | SHMA over 18 years | LP Backlog | Total plan target | Pre <b>Nov 13</b> SHLAA Supply ( <b>less</b> proposed Green Belt sites) | Difference  |
|------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------|---|-------------|
| Total      | 8400               | 7560               | 1167       | 8727              | 11856   | +3129       |
| Market     | 5200               | 4680               | 757        | 5437              | 8921  | +3434       |
| Affordable | 3200               | 2880               | 410        | 3290              | 2935  | <b>-355</b> |

Green Belt Allocations to make good the difference re affordable housing

|                | Market | Aff        | Total |
|----------------|--------|------------|-------|
| Bath, Weston   | 90     | 60         | 150   |
| Bath Odd, Down | 180    | 120        | 300   |
| Keynsham East  | 175    | 75         | 250   |
| Keynsham South | 140    | 60         | 200   |
| Whitchurch     | 140    | 60         | 200   |
| Total          | 725    | <b>375</b> | 1100  |

| Pre Nov 13 SHLAA Supply ( <b>plus</b> Green Belt)* | Difference vs total plan target |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 12956  | +4229                           |
| 9646   | +4209                           |
| 3310   | <b>+20</b>                      |