
B&NES Placemaking Plan Examination: Hearing Statement Matter 2: Overall Approach

By Barton Willmore
On behalf of Taylor Wimpey

Representor no. 234 - Land at Chilcompton Road, Midsomer Norton

August 2016

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Hearing Statement Matter 2: Overall Approach**

**By Barton Willmore
On behalf of Taylor Wimpey
Representor no. 234**

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Issue 2 – whether the overall requirements of the adopted CS would be achieved through the Placemaking Plan

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 This Examination Statement has been prepared by Barton Willmore on behalf of Taylor Wimpey in respect of land at Chilcompton Road, Midsomer Norton. A site plan is included in Appendix 1.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Having reviewed the draft Placemaking Plan and the evidence base, we consider that there is a real risk that the Placemaking Plan will not deliver the housing requirement of 13,000 homes contained in Core Strategy Policy DW1, for the following reasons:

- B&NES does not have a five year housing land supply;
- There is a history of slow housing delivery in the authority;
- There is a historic housing shortfall which needs to be provided for;
- The Placemaking Plan only allocates sites already within the planning system (with an allocation or planning application/permission);
- The Joint Spatial Plan for the West of England outlines significant future housing needs as demonstrated via the Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Wider Bristol Housing Market Area (South Gloucestershire, North Somerset and Bristol), some of which will need to be accommodated in B&NES);
- The Core Strategy requirement of 13,000 homes is not a 'cap' and nor are the individual 'policy area' requirements – other suitable/sustainable sites should be allocated in excess of this figure;
- Sites identified in SHLAA will not deliver housing as expected; and
- There is an over reliance on brownfield sites which can take a long time to deliver due to site specific issues such as contamination.

3.0 FIVE YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

3.1 The five year requirement for a Council is calculated by first multiplying the annual average housing requirement as set out in the local plan. We set out below our methodology and calculation of B&NES five year housing land supply requirement step by step below:

1. The B&NES Core Strategy housing requirement for the plan period is 13,000 homes and the plan period runs for 18 years. Therefore, on average the council needs to deliver 722 homes per year ($13,000 / 18 = 722$ homes);
2. The "basic" five-year housing requirement is 3,610 homes ($722 \text{ homes} \times 5 \text{ years} = 3,610$ homes). However, the council failed to deliver the average annualised requirement (722 homes) over the first 5 years of the plan period (2011/12 – 2015-16), only overseeing the delivery of 3,026 homes;
3. The shortfall over last 5 year is therefore 584 homes ($3,610$ minus $3,026$);
4. Adding in the 584 homes shortfall results in a five-year housing requirement of 4,194 homes (shortfall of 584 + basic requirement of 3,610 = 4,194 homes);
5. Apply the 20% buffer (para 47 of NPPF), given the persistent record of under-delivery of housing in B&NES, results in a five-year requirement of **5,033 homes** ($4,194 \times 1.2 = 5,033$ homes), or **1,007 homes** a year over the next 5 years ($5,033 / 5 = 1,007$ homes).

3.2 On the basis of the above, B&NES five year housing land supply requirement is 5,033 homes.

4.0 BARTON WILLMORE REVIEW OF B&NES FIVE HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

4.1 We have carried out a review of the sites included in B&NES five year housing land supply trajectory to identify the most up to date five year housing land supply position. The full methodology and background to our assessment is set out in our response to Matter 16, and in the interests of the Inspector's time and not duplicating content we have not repeated this detail in this hearing statement and instead a brief summary is included below:

- We examined the sites included in the December 2014 and April 2016 B&NES Housing Land Supply Findings Report and appended housing trajectories; as well as the housing land supply evidence submitted by B&NES and the Appellant Edward Ware Homes for Planning Appeals: (APP/FO114/A/14/2217216; APP/FO114/A/14/2215930 and APP/FO11114/A/2214596).
- The Edward Ware appeals identified 18 disputed sites contained in B&NES five year housing land supply, based on an analysis of the sites contained in the December 2014 Five Year Housing Land Supply Trajectory dated December 2014. Since that time B&NES has published an updated Housing Land Supply Findings Report and accompanying trajectory dated April 2016. For consistency, we have therefore carried out an analysis for a sample of B&NES' housing trajectory; namely 11 of the 18 disputed sites, based on the more recent figures from the April 2016 evidence base. Our assessment identifies 11 sites where the projected completion rates are called into question.
- Our analysis of the 11 sites is enclosed in at Appendix 2. The table includes the five year housing land supply figure for the period 2016 – 2021 included in the April 2016 trajectory as well as that included in the 2014 trajectory. The table includes our assumption of what we consider each site will deliver over the next five years and commentary to justify this in the final column. Our assumptions are based on our experience of site delivery, and the following key principles.
- Our analysis found that:
 - There are sites included which have an allocation but no planning permission. These need to be approached with caution, and as discussed above it is

unrealistic that any homes will be delivered on these sites within the next three years;

- Several of the sites included have outline planning permission, and will therefore still need approval of reserved matters and conditions, which can take several months, or years;
- Some of the sites do not have a formal planning permission, only a resolution to grant permission, and a Section 106 agreement still needs to be signed. This can often be a protracted process, which will then need to be followed by the approval of pre-commencement planning conditions and any reserved matters before work can commence on site. This process can be lengthy; and
- There are inconsistencies between the Housing Land Supply Findings Report (April 2016) and the Housing Trajectory which is appended to said report. For example the Fire Station is included in the trajectory as having the potential to deliver 90 homes over the next five years, but the Housing Land Supply Findings Report states that a prior approval application (LPA ref: 15/04723/ODCOU), was submitted in August 2015 for change of use from B1a (office) to 110 residential units but was subsequently withdrawn due to highways objection. It is therefore unclear why this site is still included in B&NES housing trajectory as a deliverable site.

4.2 Through our assessment of the 11 disputed sites, our total figure for these sites is 1,090 homes less than B&NES five year projection for these sites. As such, we have deducted this figure from B&NES total five year supply figure of 5,438 homes, and our assessment therefore finds that B&NES has a five year housing land supply of 4,348 homes, equating to 4.3 years. Our calculations and outputs are summarised below:

a) B&NES Housing land supply assessment:

- The council believes it has a deliverable supply of land for **5,438 homes** (2016/17 – 2020/21);
- This would equate to **5.4 years** of supply (5,438 homes supply / 1,007 homes needed a year = 5.4 years).

b) Barton Willmore Housing land supply assessment:

- We consider that the council only has at most a deliverable supply of land for **4,348 homes** (2016/17 – 2020/21);

- This equates to, at most, **4.3 years** of supply (4,348 homes supply / 1,007 homes needed a year = 4.3 years).

4.3 As outlined above, our analysis identifies, at most, a five year housing land supply of 4.3 years, which is a significant under supply. Due to the five year housing land supply shortfall and historic under provision of housing in B&NES, it is unlikely that the Core Strategy housing requirement will be met if further allocations are not made to address this risk.

5.0 PLACEMAKING PLAN DELIVERY OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ADOPTED CS

- 5.1 If the 13,000 homes requirement is not delivered by the Placemaking Plan, the overall requirements of the Core Strategy will fail to be achieved. Specifically, Core Strategy Policy DW1 District-wide Spatial Strategy which includes the requirement for 13,000 homes would not be achieved, and the DW1 strategy to create a net increase in 10,300 jobs would be significantly undermined by an undersupply of housing.
- 5.2 The Placemaking Plan cannot meet the overall housing requirement 13,000 homes with its current five year housing land supply shortfall. Until this housing deficit is met it is impossible to see how B&NES will meet its housing requirement.
- 5.3 Given that B&NES has a housing land supply shortfall and historic under provision of housing, it should be looking to allocate sustainable sites such as land at Chilcompton Road, Midsomer Norton, which has the capacity to deliver 100-120 homes. The site benefits from being in Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding), is well contained on both sides of Chilcompton Road and is well related to the existing urban area to the north. Development of the site would be of a sufficient size to make a meaningful contribution to the future housing needs of Midsomer Norton, and the authority as a whole.
- 5.4 The need for B&NES to allocate additional sites is particularly important given the strategic context for future housing needs demonstrated by SHMA for the Wider Bristol HMA contained in the emerging Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) for B&NES, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. The JSP requires the delivery of 85,000 homes in the Bristol HMA over the next 20 years, and this figure is likely to be significantly increased in the next round of JSP consultation in September 2016, based on further evidence on housing need. Although the Wider Bristol HMA covers Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire and not B&NES, B&NES will still be required to allocate sites to contribute to the housing requirement under the Duty to Cooperate. The consequence of the JSP process is that the housing requirement for B&NES is likely to increase, and it would therefore be "good planning" for B&NES to plan for this now by allocating additional sites, to avoid the risk of further delays to the adoption of their Local Plan.
- 5.5 The NPPF 2012 is clear that at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which should be seen as a golden

thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking. For plan-making this means that: local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area; Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change (Paragraph 14, NPPF). In order to meet the requirements of the NPPF, B&NES should be seeking to allocate Taylor Wimpey's site at Chilcompton Road, Midsomer Norton, to contribute to the housing shortfall in a sustainable location and at a site considered by the Core Strategy as suitable for residential development.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 On the basis of the above, we consider that in its current form the Placemaking Plan is unsound. It fails to meet the NPPF tests of soundness of being positively prepared, justified, effective, or consistent with national policy. The draft Placemaking Plan is not flexible or adaptive to change and fails to consider the implications of the Joint Spatial Plan and the requirement to accommodate the housing need from the Wider Bristol HMA under Duty to Cooperate and in this respect it fails to be in accordance with national policy. The soundness of the Plan is significantly compromised by its lack of flexibility to respond and adapt to change. As such, we consider the Placemaking Plan to be unsound, and comprehensive work will need to be undertaken on the evidence base and housing need in order to deliver the objectives of the Core Strategy and the Joint Spatial Plan.

APPENDIX 1
SITE LOCATION PLAN