

Gladman Developments Ltd

Matter 9 Hearing Statement

Lewes Local Plan Part 2

Site Allocations and Development Management

Development Management, Uncertainties and Risks



March 2019

Matter 9.3 – Uncertainties and Risks

1.1. Q9.3 – Overall, does the Plan take sufficient account of uncertainties and risks? How flexible is it?

- 1.1.1. Gladman do not consider that the Part 2 Local Plan takes sufficient account of uncertainties and risks in ensuring that the housing requirement is met or surpassed.
- 1.1.2. Once recent commitments and completions have been taken into account, the Part 2 Local Plan is left to allocate sufficient sites to meet the residual requirement of 105 dwellings. However, the Part 2 Local Plan seeks to allocate a total of 132 dwellings thereby providing only a very small element of flexibility above and beyond the requirements of the Part 1 Local Plan.
- 1.1.3. Whilst flexibility is welcomed, 27 additional dwellings is considered to be totally insufficient flexibility so as to be almost meaningless. It represents a 1.6% increase on the residual requirement of 1,660 dwellings which was identified as the starting point for preparing the Part 2 Local Plan.
- 1.1.4. The HBF always suggest that an appropriate buffer of up to 20% additional dwellings above the housing requirement should be allocated in Local Plans to ensure that the overall requirement is met or superseded. This is mirrored in the LPEG Report which proposed that *“the NPPF makes clear that local plans should be required not only to demonstrate a five-year land supply but also focus on ensuring a more effective supply of developable land for the medium to long term (over the whole plan period), plus make provision for, and provide a mechanism for the release of, developable Reserve Sites equivalent to 20% of their housing requirement, as far as is consistent with the policies set out in the NPPF”*
- 1.1.5. Given that such a small contingency in housing land supply is currently provided in the Part 2 Local Plan, coupled with the fact that a significant numbers of dwellings are still to be allocated through emerging Neighbourhood Plans and reliance on the full delivery of allowances made for windfall and rural exception sites, it is considered that the risk of slippage and delay in delivery is considerable with no flexibility built in to address any shortfalls expediently.
- 1.1.6. This issue is further exacerbated by the fact that the Part 2 Local Plan has been prepared in the context of a recognised shortfall in housing provision established within the Part 1 Local Plan, with no means identified as to how this shortfall will be addressed, apart from through a full review of the Part 1 Local Plan. Gladman also has concerns with the deliverability of certain sites which have been allocated in the Part 2 Local Plan which have been outlined in our Hearing Statement for Matter 3.3.
- 1.1.7. With the delivery uncertainties highlighted above, alongside the lack of flexibility identified within the Part 2 Local Plan, it is considered highly likely that the Plan will fail in its early years and the Council’s housing land supply to drop below 5 years. To avoid this occurring, additional flexibility

needs to be built into the Part 2 Local Plan to ensure it is responsive to rapid change and to avoid the need for local people to have to await a Local Plan Review to be completed before their housing needs are met.

- 1.1.8. It is suggested that this flexibility could be built into the current plan through a number of Main Modifications before the Part 2 Local Plan is adopted, as set out below.
- 1.1.9. First, there is the need to allocate further land through the Part 2 Local Plan. Gladman consider that an additional supply of at least 20% should be planned for above the residual housing requirement subject to constraints. This approach would provide greater certainty that the minimum requirements of the Local Plan can be met in full. It would also ensure that the Local Plan is more adaptable to change which may be experienced during the plan period.
- 1.1.10. Secondly, the Council should adopt a flexible and positive policy framework for the determination of applications submitted on sites which are not allocated for development within the Local Plan. Such a policy would provide scope for proportionate and appropriately scaled development to come forward on sites which are located on unidentified sites beyond the settlement boundary, provided they are well related and adjacent to existing specified settlements, and subject to meeting other local and national planning policy requirements. The adoption of this approach would prove a boost to sustainable housing delivery.
- 1.1.11. Such a policy has been prepared relatively locally by Ashford Council through Policy HOU5 of the Ashford Local Plan 2030 (recently adopted). The policy text (as modified) reads:

“Proposals for residential development adjoining or close to the existing built up confines of [listed] settlements will be acceptable.. provided that each of the following criteria is met:

- a) The scale of development proposed is proportionate to the size of the settlement and the level, type and quality of day to day service provision currently available, and commensurate with the ability of those services to absorb the level of development in combination with any planned allocations in this Local Plan and committed development, in liaison with service providers;***
- b) The site is within easy walking distance of basic day to day services in the nearest settlement, and/or has access to sustainable methods of transport to access a range of services;***
- c) The development is able to be safely accessed from the local road network and the traffic generated can be accommodated on the local and wider road network without adversely affect the character of the surrounding area;***
- d) The development is located where it is possible to maximise the use of public transport, cycling and walking to access services;***

- e) Conserve and enhance the natural environment and preserve or enhance any heritage assets in the locality; and**
- f) The development (and any associated infrastructure) is of a high-quality design and meets the following requirements:**
 - i) It sits sympathetically within the wider landscape;**
 - ii) It preserves or enhances the setting of the nearest settlement;**
 - iii) It includes an appropriately sized and designed landscape buffer to the open countryside;**
 - iv) It is consistent with local character and built form, including scale, bulk, and the materials used;**
 - v) It does not adversely impact on neighbouring uses or a good standard of amenity for nearby residents;**
 - vi) It would conserve biodiversity interests on the site and/or adjoining area and not adversely affect the integrity of international and national protected sites in line with Policy ENV1.**

1.1.12. Gladman consider that a similar policy should be implemented in the case of Lewes. Safeguards relating to size, location and impacts included within the policy would ensure that the overall spatial strategy as defined in the Part 1 Local Plan would be safeguarded and reflected in decision making when applying the policy. The policy would be beneficial in enabling additional development not otherwise provided by the development plan, ensuring that sustainable housing delivery is maximised within the district.