

**Gladman Developments Ltd**

**Matter 8 Hearing Statement**

**Lewes Local Plan Part 2**

**Site Allocations and Development Management**

**Policy DM1: Settlement Boundaries**



**March 2019**



## **Matter 8 – Policy DM1: Settlement Boundaries**

### **1.1. Q8.2 Is Policy DM1 too restrictive, especially in relation to the need to accommodate an additional 468 dwellings as set out in the Plan?**

- 1.1.1. Gladman consider that the wording of Policy DM1 is too restrictive in terms of the scale and type of development which is permitted beyond settlement boundaries. Gladman believe that the implementation of Policy DM1 would be potentially harmful to the deliverability of the Local Plan given the noted absence of flexibility within the supply.
- 1.1.2. As set out in our Matter 9 Statement, it is clear that the Council is reliant on the near full delivery of its identified windfall allowance in order to meet the housing requirement of the Part 1 Local Plan in full. Taken together, the supply afforded by completions, commitments, strategic and non-strategic allocations, Neighbourhood Plan allocations, windfall development and rural exception sites amounts to just 27 dwellings in excess of the adopted housing requirement. As a result, it is evident that there is a high degree of risk that the housing requirement of the Local Plan will not be delivered in full by 2030.
- 1.1.3. The restrictive nature of Policy DM1 serves to increase the risk of under delivery of housing by reducing the potential scope for windfall development to come forward within the district. The Council's approach to Policy DM1 misses the opportunity to adopt a positive and flexible framework for decision making where additional supply could be granted without significant delay, providing for a Local Plan which is much more adaptable to change.
- 1.1.4. As submitted Policy DM1 permits only limited forms of development beyond settlement boundaries. Such development includes; Rural Exception Sites (through Policy DM2), Rural Worker Dwellings (through Policy DM3), and residential conversions (through Policy DM4).
- 1.1.5. Table 2 of the submission Part 2 Local Plan illustrates that an allowance for rural exception sites of 77 dwellings is made through the Local Plan to account for potential contributions made from this source of supply. Schemes submitted under Policy DM2 would not therefore contribute to the Council's windfall allowance.
- 1.1.6. Only a minor contribution to the supply could be expected from development brought forward under Policies DM3 and DM4 noting the restrictive scale and limited forms of the development permitted under these policies. The Council is therefore almost wholly reliant on unidentified and unquantified sites located within the settlement boundary in order to meet its windfall allowance of 468 dwellings.
- 1.1.7. Gladman acknowledge that the windfall allowance has already been subject to examination and found sound. As such the role of windfalls in the housing land supply is accepted by Gladman.

Notwithstanding this, it is however unclear what success the Council has had in securing the necessary completions and commitments to meet this allowance since 2015.

1.1.8. Table 4 of the Part 2 Local Plan sets out that since April 2015 305 dwellings have been committed or built at sites not allocated or identified in Neighbourhood Plans. It is unclear whether these sites qualify as windfall development already included as an allowance in the Plan or whether this windfall allowance has yet to be delivered. Gladman request clarification from the Council with regards to these sites and windfall delivery/commitments achieved since April 2015.

1.1.9. Notwithstanding the outcome of the above exercise, Gladman nevertheless consider that there is a strong justification for the wording of Policy DM1 to be revised and the position relaxed in terms of the scope of development which is permitted beyond settlement boundaries. Gladman consider that the justification for this is provided by the following factors:

- The overall level of supply provided by the plan is just 27 dwellings in excess of the housing requirement. This is the equivalent of just 5 weeks supply in the context of a 20-year plan and provides flexibility of just 1.6% to the residual housing requirement. This means that the Lewes Local Plan is at high risk of failure should conditions change, or one single site/permission fails to come forward as envisaged. Increasing the scope for windfalls within the policies of the plan will help to alleviate this issue;
- Approximately 16% of the supply per year is to be delivered on windfall/rural exception sites with full delivery of this allowance required to meet the housing requirement in full. Increasing the potential scope for windfall delivery will therefore benefit the certainty that this can be delivered;
- There is evidence of uncertainty of the achievability of several allocations proposed in the Part Two Local Plan, at which none or under delivery could mean that the housing requirement will not be achieved in full. The broadening of this policy would help reduce the potential affect that none or under delivery would have for the wider Local Plan;
- There is evidence that sites identified within the Local Plan have failed to come forward as expected previously (lapsed). Further lapses in consents would increase the pressure on the deliverability of the housing requirement. The broadening of this policy would help reduce the potential affect that lapse planning consents would have for the wider Local Plan;
- Results of the Housing Delivery Test published in February 2019 concludes the need for a 20% buffer to be applied to the five-year supply calculation for the district. The results of the Housing Delivery Test illustrate the need for a boost in housing land supply within the district in response to increasing housing need. The implementation of a more flexible approach to decision making within the district would assist with this context; and

- The housing needs of the district are ever increasing as illustrated by the Government's indicative tables for the application of the Standard Method. An increase in supply would be beneficial in responding to this more up-to-date indication of housing need.
- 1.1.10. Gladman has submitted the potential wording for this revised approach in our Matter 3 and 9 Hearing Statements which could be applied in Lewes through Main Modifications to Policy DM1. The wording closely reflects that which has now been found sound and adopted through Policy HOU5 of the Ashford Local Plan. Gladman consider that Policy HOU5 of the Ashford Local Plan strikes the necessary balance between providing sufficient scope for additional flexibility in supply whilst also ensuring safeguards are in place so that any development permitted in accordance with the policy is consistent with the wider spatial strategy and achieves the principles of sustainable development.
- 1.1.11. Flexible policies are becoming an ever more prominent feature in emerging development plans as local planning authorities seek to ensure that Local Plans are able to adapt to change and meet the needs of rural areas. In addition to Ashford, flexible policies have also been proposed or adopted in Amber Valley (Policy H1), Harrogate (Policy GS3), Harborough (Policy GD2) and Tendring (Policy SPL2).