



Housing Delivery Performance

Bromsgrove District Plan

October 2013



Housing Delivery Performance

1 Introduction

- 1.1 For a number of years it has been necessary for Local Authorities to maintain a supply of deliverable sites to ensure that there is a constant supply of new build properties available on the market in order to meet identified needs. Following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) it has become clear that local planning authorities should significantly boost the supply of housing to address the low levels house building nationally in recent years. It is considered that increased levels of house building will help to meet unmet need and demand for both affordable and market housing whilst also stimulating economic recovery. To help achieve this paragraph 47 of the NPPF states:

“Local planning authorities should identify and update annually specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years worth of housing against their housing requirements with an additional buffer of 5% (moved forward from later in the plan period) to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. Where there has been a record of persistent under delivery of housing, local planning authorities should increase the buffer to 20%”

- 1.2 No further guidance is provided as to how local planning authorities should determine whether they should apply an additional 5% or 20% buffer. However, this paper will look at housing completions across whole plan periods to determine whether the Council has a track record of achieving targets within adopted plans. This will help to identify any trends in performance and therefore determine whether an additional buffer of 5% or 20% would be more appropriate in this instance. It is considered important to look at periods in excess of 10 years as this will include both peaks and troughs of the housing market. The emerging Local Plan will cover the period 2011-2030 however with only

2 years of the plan period completed this does not provide a sound basis for identifying trends.

2 Worcestershire County Structure Plan 1996-2011

2.1 The Structure Plan was adopted by the County Council on 4th June 2001 and set out housing targets for each Worcestershire District in the 15 year period between 1996 and 2011. The target for Bromsgrove District over this period was 3950 dwellings (263 per annum). The table below highlights the number of homes delivered each year throughout the plan period.

Worcestershire Structure Plan 1996 - 2011															
Year	96/ 97	97/ 98	98/ 99	99/ 00	00/ 01	01/ 02	02/ 03	03/ 04	04/ 05	05/ 06	06/ 07	07/ 08	08/ 09	09/ 10	10/ 11
Annual Completions	291	254	199	331	583	539	518	474	509	332	276	135	159	72	122
Cumulative Completions	291	545	744	1075	1658	2197	2715	3189	3698	4030	4306	4441	4600	4672	4722

2.2 The Structure Plan target was achieved in 2005/06 which was 5 years before the end of the plan period. Over the whole plan period the target of 3950 was exceeded by 772 dwellings. This emphasises that there was no under performance in relation to the achievement of the Structure Plan target.

3 West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy 2001-2021

3.1 The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) was published in June 2004. The document provided housing targets for each county in the West Midlands but figures were not broken down to district level. Following advice from the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) the Council began to apply the Bromsgrove proportion of the countywide Structure Plan target to the Worcestershire figure in the RSS. This resulted in the district needing to provide 14% of the Worcestershire target over the period 2001-2021 which was a total of 3668 dwellings (183 per annum).

RSS 2001 - 2021												
Year	01/ 02	02/03	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/ 07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/ 11	11/ 12	12/13
Completions	539	518	474	509	332	276	135	159	72	122	256	130
Cumulative Completions	539	1059	1533	2042	2374	2650	2785	2944	3016	3138	3394	3524

3.2 The table highlights that the Council was almost certain to exceed the previously adopted RSS target a number of years before the end of the plan period. With 8 years of the plan period remaining only 144 dwellings needed to be completed to achieve the target of 3668 dwellings.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Both of these adopted plan periods highlight that the Council has a good track record of delivering housing. It is acknowledged that between 2007/08 and the present day completions were on average lower due to both the housing moratorium and the global economic recession. Between 2003 and 2009 no new permissions were granted for market housing meaning that most completions had been built out by 2007. A moratorium was imposed as the Council was in such a significant position of over-supply that greater control was needed to ensure conformity with relevant Structure Plan policies. This clearly shows that Council does not have a track record of persistent under performance.
- 4.2 Since lifting the moratorium it has taken time for the development industry to adjust with there being a lag time between gaining consent and completing a development. This process has become all the more problematic during the economic recession when it has been notoriously difficult to deliver a large number of homes. It is not just Bromsgrove District that has had low levels of completions in recent years with similar trends prevailing across the county, region and the whole of the UK. For example, the level of completions across Worcestershire has steadily declined from 1948 dwellings in 2006/07 to just 988 dwellings in 2010/11. In 2011/12 the levels of completions rose across the County to 1,508 of which 261 were delivered in Bromsgrove District. This is above average performance when compared to the other Worcestershire authorities. Appeal decisions at both Leys Lane, Meriden (APP/Q4625/A/12/2169840) and Riveria Way, Torquay (APP/X1165/A/11/2165846) highlight that reduced levels of completions during a recession do not amount to persistent under delivery.
- 4.3 It also important to note that the Council's approach was supported by an Inspector at a recent public Inquiry (APP/P1805/A/13/2196784) in

relation to proposals for 26 dwellings at Hasluck Green Road, Majors Green. He stated:

“In relation to the application of a 5% or 20% buffer, the Council explained that the previous Structure Plan target up to the period 2010/2011 was reached early and so the Council implemented a moratorium running from 2003 to 2009 during which time the Council effectively granted no residential permissions for market housing. This was combined with the recession which started to take effect around 2008. I acknowledge that the Council itself, as recently as 2012, included a 20% buffer in its own calculations. However, the Council now points out that they consider that a longer time period is needed to indicate persistent under delivery (perhaps a whole plan period) and the underlying economic climate should include a whole cycle rather than just a recessionary period. I agree with the Council that the appellants’ view is somewhat constricted and a wider perspective gives a truer picture in this case. Furthermore, the Council are now bringing forward their Areas of Development Restraint (ADR) sites, which now form allocations for development in the emerging BDP. Therefore, I consider that the Council is taking sufficient action to stimulate housing delivery. In these circumstances a buffer of 20% is not warranted.”

- 4.4 On the basis that targets within adopted plans have been comfortably achieved it is considered that an additional buffer of 5% is appropriate. It is therefore recommended that the additional 5% buffer is applied to future land supply calculations to inform both plan making and relevant planning applications.

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