

Cornwall Local Plan : Site Allocations DPD Inquiry.

Position Statement : The Saltash Site Allocations Development Plan.

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representing the North and Middle Pill Landowner Consortium Saltash, Cornwall.

Recommendations :

That due to the high level of cumulative risk identified in planning the delivery of the Saltash DPD the Inspectors require Cornwall Council :-

- a. To implement immediately, and as an interim measure, to offset housing delivery risks NPPF buffer provisions to increase the housing allocation by 20% on land alternative to the Broadmoor development.
- b. To review arrangements to improve cross-border strategic planning between Plymouth City Council and other neighbouring planning authorities as it effects Saltash and other settlements within the Plymouth Zone of Influence.
- c. To make an allocation of 10ha for a phased self and custom build development in North and Middle Pill to help address the major identified shortfall for affordable housing in Saltash.

1.0. Introduction.

1.1. The Inspectors have a wish to examine five issues in relation to **Matter 11 - Saltash Spatial Strategy and Allocations.**

1.2. The previous landowner representation submitted under Cornwall Site Allocations Development Plan Document (Allocations DPD): Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Consultation in August 2017 examined a number of issues which challenged the integrity of the Saltash Site Allocations DPD.

1.3. This Position Statement does not repeat our recorded summary views other than material information omitted from the officer's summary. Comments are also made on "Officer Responses."

1.4. **The separate Position Statement prepared into Legal Compliance : Duty to Co-operate with Plymouth City Council and its partner local planning authorities** has relevance to all five issues considered here.

1.5. Deficiencies do appear to exist. Some are significant carrying high adverse risk on the delivery of the Saltash DPD, whilst the impact and likelihood of others are still unclear. A **Risk Assessment (Table 1)** considers the key risks associated with ensuring the safe delivery of the Saltash DPD.

1.6. The conclusion reached is that whilst these deficiencies carry a level of individual risk, cumulatively the level of risk is highly significant in relation to the robustness and integrity of the Saltash DPD.

1.7. Issues a. to e. identified by the Inspectors are now considered.

2.0. General Issue a.

Is the Strategy for Saltash consistent with the LPSP?

2.1. The simple answer is **no!** In our opinion it is flawed in relation to Housing Growth Policy and Planning. The following paragraphs justify this assertion.

2.2. Key details have been omitted from the CC Spreadsheet in summarising Consultee Responses. Our original consultation response considered four reasons why the Housing Strategy was deficient.

“Reason 1 : the lack of adequate consideration of the Economic Growth implications arising from the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014 to 2034

This issue is addressed in Position Statement relating to Matter 1- Legal Compliance : The Duty to Co-operate;

Reason 2 : the considerable risk in relying upon the Broadmoor Farm Urban Extension as a single strategic site to meet Saltash minimum housing target obligations through to 2030.

This issue is addressed in issue e. below;

Reason 3 is that no robust planning methodology has been applied to predict the target and hence planning level for **the provision of Affordable Housing** to meet local need through to 2030 resulting in an absence of strategy within the DPD to ensure the delivery of forecast numbers. Indeed, there is no mention of Affordable Housing at all within the Saltash DPD;

This aspect is considered in detail in the following paragraphs; and

Reason 4 is that the combined total effect of the three deficiencies call into question the integrity of the **Sustainability conclusions** for the Saltash DPD.

This is the resultant conclusion derived from the deficiencies arising from Reasons 1,2 and 3.”

2.3. The following paragraphs concentrate on **Reason 3** the Affordable Housing issue in Saltash.

2.4. The case advanced under the consultation submission but omitted from the officer’s summary is reproduced here.

Reason 3 : There is an inadequate assessment for predicted Affordable Housing demand to meet local needs through to 2030, and an absence of a robust and meaningful planning strategy to deliver same within the Saltash DPD.

In addition to the affordable housing policy information embodied within the Cornwall Local Plan, the following information sources are of relevance.

- 1. The Cornwall Local Plan : Strategic Policies Hypothetical Allocation of the Twenty Year Housing Target for The Cornwall Gateway Community Network Area;*
- 2. Qualifying criteria as per www.cornwall.gov.uk/housing/housing-options/homechoice-housing-register/ and*
- 3. The Schedule of Council Minimum Bedroom Need (Homechoice Register) for the parish.*

The Cornwall Council affordable Housing Team have stated that they

“do not project growth assumptions for affordable housing but instead use current identified need data...”

This is imprudent at best. At worst it neglects the true needs of Saltash into the future.

There is potentially a very significant shortfall in the supply of affordable housing through to 2030 for Saltash.

Cornwall Council advise that demand from Bands A to E should be considered.

Using Cornwall Council’s 30% policy target for affordable housing provision on approved residential developments against a 2016 affordable housing demand figure of 664 and excluding any growth assumptions through to 2030 requires a housing allocation of 1992. This is against a Local Plan provision of 1200.

Omitting Band E need (considered Non-welfare cases), reduces demand by 371 to 293 suggesting a housing allocation of 879, a figure within the Local Plan provision of 1200. However these figures do not allow for any growth in demand between now and 2030.

What annual growth rate should be assumed for planning purposes based upon the 2016 figures?

1% p.a. growth increases present numbers by 15% over the next 14 years to 2030

2% p.a. growth increases present numbers by 32% over the next 14 years to 2030.

5% p.a. growth increases present numbers by 98% over the next 14 years to 2030.

This demonstrates a very worrying and real under provision of housing for Saltash under the DPD. This needs to be re-examined and more robust planning assumptions applied to determine an appropriate overall housing target for the Saltash DPD.

If not re-examined, what are the Site Allocations Saltash DPD policy intentions for affordable housing? Are they :-

- 1. Do nothing and consciously underprovide.*
- 2. Only plan to meet the demand from Bands A-D.*
- 3. Encourage the development affordable housing with the private sector, especially for studio (bed-sit) accommodation to meet Band E demand, but how ?*
- 4. Work with an existing or establish a local Community Land/Property Trust (CPT) to increase affordable housing supply above that provided by private and public/social developers, but how to secure land ?*
- 5. Seek to increase the percentage of housing presently provided within the Cornwall Local Plan to enable proportionately more affordable housing.*
- 6. Encourage the regeneration and intensification of existing social housing sites in the Parish.*
- 7. Permit 3/4/5 storey developments to limit land-take requirements.*
- 8. Look for cross-subsidisation opportunities to enable regeneration of existing social housing sites by the inclusion of contiguous or non-contiguous land.*
- 9. Increase land allocations/identify exemption sites/ secure land for CPT for development with higher affordable housing allocation.*
- 10. Extend solutions beyond 2030.*
- 11. Hypothecate monies secured from the disposal of "council housing" by Cornwall Council in Saltash to assist in funding replacement affordable accommodation.*

More importantly, what is the Plan under the Saltash (Site Allocations) DPD for Affordable Housing provision through to 2030 and how will the perceived disconnect between the Local Plan, Site Allocations DPD and Saltash Neighbourhood Plan be addressed?

As concluded under Reason 2, further Site Allocations for strategic and/or non-strategic schemes elsewhere within Saltash would be a prudent contingency measure to help meet affordable housing requirements to 2030.

2.5. Relying upon an annual monitoring of Affordable Housing Need when there is already an identified shortfall in Saltash may be the chosen response but this does not make it the right response. Moreover it does not proffer how the shortfall in provision will be addressed.

2.6. At 30% Affordable housing provision, Broadmoor will provide somewhere in the region of 300 affordable homes by 2030, a shortfall of some 300 at present figures. At a density of 40 dwellings per hectare this would require a further basic land allocation of some 7.5ha. to address only present need. As

a major strategic issue identified within the DPD, it would be prudent and in-line with growth predictions shown above, to increase this basic land allocation by some 30% to provide flexibility in meeting a forecast of only 2% pa through to 2030 or alternatively lower density developments of 30 dwellings per hectare. This measure would necessitate increasing a land allocation by some 10hectares. In order to spread the high dependency of Broadmoor it would be prudent to make such allocation on a different Saltash site.

2.7. The Council's statutory obligations under the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016, and policy in the National Planning Policy Framework are also pertinent.

2.8. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 provides a duty on Councils to meet demand on their Self-build and Custom Housebuilding register by granting "development permissions" for enough serviced plots to meet demand on a rolling annual basis. The National Planning Policy Framework also asks Councils to assess the future housing requirements when preparing their local plans, including include requirements for "people wishing to build their own homes" (Para 159).

2.9. These considerations are material to consider how Saltash is making provision for housing and affordable housing.

2.10. The importance which Government has attached to making adequate provision for Self and Custom Build housing is also underlined in the recent Government White Paper *Fixing our broken housing market*. This also supports the establishment of the newly formed Right to Build Task Force (Paragraph 3.17) whose thrust is to "focus on delivering more affordable/lower cost custom and self-build homes." The "Heartlands Custom Build pilot in Redruth" is the Council's flagship project and we understand the Task Force have engaged with the Council about the potential longer-term future delivery strategy for Custom and Self Build housing in Cornwall.

2.11. Land at North and Middle Pill lends itself ideally to a phased self and custom build development and accords with the potential solutions advanced in our original consultation response. These were, Solution 3 (Encourage affordable housing with the private sector); Solution 4 (Work with an existing CLT); and Solution 9 (increase land allocations).

2.12. An allocation for Custom and Self Build housing would also be consistent with LPSP Policy 6: Housing Mix which makes clear that housing developments of 10 dwellings or more should include an appropriate mix of house size, type, price and tenure to address identified needs and market demand and to support mixed communities, including self-build and custom build housing.

2.13. It would also help meet the Council's longer-term duty to make provision for plots. We note that the Council's Self & Custom Build Annual Monitoring Report 2017 states that there is a total demand for 473 Self and Custom Build plots in Cornwall, including 6 registrations for 67 plots for associations. Although we note that the Report concludes that the Council is currently providing sufficient serviced plots to meet the demand identified, it is important to consider that the legislation imposes a rolling statutory requirement on the Council to make provision for serviced building plots to meet demand, which an allocated site at North and Middle Pill will help to address in strategic planning terms. Indeed, we note that the Council has not demonstrated that it has robustly assessed longer term demand for Custom and Self Build housing as set out in the Framework and associated National Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraph 11) relating to Self-build and Custom housebuilding.

2.14. The Council's own Website which contains its statutory Self-build and Custom housebuilding Register makes clear that low cost land is rare and the average open market cost of a self-build plot in the UK is over £200,000 and the Council's Annual Monitoring Report recognises that other larger developments would make a contribution to meeting the demand for plots in Cornwall. It is our intention that land at North and Middle Pill will make provision for affordable lower cost plots for people to build their own

homes, including opportunities for associations of individuals, and bring forward Custom and Self Build development opportunities which meets the need for affordable housing (eg. discount market sale plots).

2.15. The Cornwall Local Plan policy is clear that self and custom build housing can make a contribution to meeting local housing need and it recognises that both market and affordable housing can be developed as Self or Custom Build housing.

2.16. The landowners are happy to work with the Right to Build Task Force and Cornwall Council to deliver a scheme appropriate for Saltash. Indeed, encouraging initial discussions have already taken place with the Task Force to explore suitable opportunities.

3.0. General issue b.

Is the existing housing land supply situation based on robust, up to date evidence?

3.1. Although the landowners commented on this matter as part of their consultation response, it is acknowledged that Persimmon Homes and Wain Homes, who also commented at that time, are more qualified to comment in this field and will undoubtedly provide further pertinent views on land supply to the Inquiry. The risks associated with the issues raised in the earlier consultation are however reflected in the Risk Assessment at Table 1.

4.0. General Issue c.

Does the Plan make adequate provision for retail development in Saltash, having regard to the lapse of prior planning permission?

4.1. The **Cornwall Retail Study GVA Grimley Nov 2010** (Extract 1) and **GVA Bilfinger Retail Study Update March 2015** (Extract 2), emphasise the case for and importance of cross-border strategic planning with Plymouth and its partner local planning authorities. A Plymouth Retail Study was completed by GVA Bilfinger in 2017! In our opinion there do not appear to be any material issues here in relation to the Saltash DPD.

5.0. General issue d.

Does the Plan make adequate provision for the prior delivery of sewage treatment capacity to serve development proposed within the Plan period?

5.1. The Officer's Response states – *"The Council liaised with SWW in preparing the strategy text. Since the close of the consultation the Council has re-engaged with SWW who has confirmed that growth for both south east Cornwall and Plymouth is factored into their assessment of future capacity. SWW has confirmed that proposals are being progressed which is in line with the existing strategy text."*

5.2. "Weasel words!" What does this actually mean? What are the proposals that are being progressed? What timeframe is being worked to? Will it compromise the housing supply trajectory for Saltash? Are there risks associated with this issue? If so, how significant with what implications? The position is unclear. Again the issue is taken forward to Table 1.

6.0 Specific Issue e.

Is there robust evidence that the housing supply trajectory for Saltash is realistic and deliverable, having regard to its high dependence on strategic allocation SSLT-UE1 at Broadmoor?"

6.1. The officer's response states at para 13.21 *"The Council has no objection to including the additional wording "The housing apportionment for Saltash will be kept under review over the Plan period to ensure that a five year supply of deliverable sites can be demonstrated in Cornwall."*

6.2. Notwithstanding the evidence presented in this document advocating an increase in the Saltash Housing supply and resultant trajectory, it would be advantageous to understand what the contingency plan would be. This should inform the Neighbourhood Planning Process.

6.3. Again, the technical planning assessment here will undoubtedly come from Persimmon Homes. The delivery of the Broadmoor Farm development is however not without issues all of which carry delivery risks with potential to create slippage. In the absence of a published Development Plan and Programme, the severity of such risks cannot be assessed however the very nature of the risks means that there could be material effect on the housing supply trajectory. These risks are :-

- a. Reliance upon the scheme promoter securing commercial agreements with developers to build out the urban extension;
- b. Delays in securing consents for reserved matters and the effect on lead in times;
- c. Dependency on Government funding for enabling highway works at Stokedon Cross to open up the west end of the site;
- d. Ongoing viability negotiations factored into the Sec 106 agreement leading to a reduction in the affordable housing quantum or scale and quality of community facilities provided;
- e. Possible sewerage infrastructure issues; and
- f. Storm water management issues arising during development within the Latchbrook Critical Drainage Area with consequential delays.

7.0. Overall risks relating to the Housing Land Supply and Housing supply trajectory for Saltash

7.1. Table 1 overleaf provides a simple Risk Assessment which brings together all of the factors considered above.

Table 1. Saltash Site Allocations DPD RISK REGISTER to 2030

Factors Challenging the Integrity of the Saltash DPD	Specific Threat(s) to the Integrity of the Saltash DPD	Impact of Potential Threat	Mitigating Actions for the Saltash DPD
1.The Duty to Co-operate with Plymouth City Council and neighbouring planning authorities.	Proven non-compliance to have met cross-border strategic planning NPPF Duty to co-operate obligation, especially on housing matters.	Unknown but could be significant	1. Required increase in apportionment of housing allocation; 2. Establish Joint Strategic Planning Committee with Plymouth City Council and other Neighbouring Local Authorities to inform

			future LPSP/DPD review.
2. The ability to meet present and future a. Affordable Housing Needs; b. Right to Buy cases; & c. Self-build and Custom Build housing.	Present recognised under-provision exacerbated considerably.	High	1. Immediate Implementation of NPPF +20% buffer provisions; 2. Further strategic site allocations including a phased self-build/custom build scheme.
3. The adequacy of retail provision.	Not over material as proposed	Low	1. Probably not an issue at present. No immediate action required. 2. Address future needs as part of Joint Strategic Planning Committee with Plymouth City Council and other Neighbouring Local Authorities to inform future LPSP/DPD review.
4. The adequacy of SWW sewerage treatment capacity.	Limitations on scale and programming of housing development and consequential adverse affect to Saltash Housing Supply Trajectory.	Unknown but could be extremely significant	1. CC to advise on SWW plan and programme and introduce contingency plans as necessary.
5. The high dependence on the Broadmoor Farm Strategic Allocation to meet Saltash Housing Supply Trajectory	1. Delay in disposing of parcelled sites to developers. 2. Delay in securing consents on all reserved matters. 3. Delay in completing major Highway works at Stokedon cross required to open up west end. 4. Ongoing viability issues reducing Sec 106 affordable housing and other community benefits. 5. SUDs/storm water management issues arising during development for Latchbrook Critical Drainage Area. (Saltash Community Flood Forum)	High	1. Immediate Implementation of NPPF +20% buffer provisions; 2. Further compensating strategic site allocations including a phased self-build /custom build scheme.
6. The absence of any contingency plan.	Inability to respond quickly to house building trajectory Slippage.	High	As for 5 above.

8.0. Conclusions and Recommendations.

8.1. There is evidence that the Saltash Site Allocations DPD carries considerable inherent risks, even if setting aside any Duty to Co-operate deficiencies. More fundamentally, there is a policy vacuum on how the Affordable Housing issue should be addressed nor any mention of Self build and Custom build obligations. There is also little guidance to Saltash Town Council on the responses or options it should address in preparing its Neighbourhood Plan. This is not merely a case of providing an Affordable Housing policy document for the County. It is about addressing a specific identified local issue which will grow.

8.2. There is a disconnect here between the responsibilities which the CC see as their obligation under preparing the DPD to merely allocate strategic sites necessary to meet the LP apportioned housing trajectory and how specific local housing needs should be addressed.

8.4. Accordingly, the Inspectors are asked to consider the introduction of the recommendations presented at the beginning of this statement. These are considered to be prudent and practical approaches designed to mitigate and minimise risk by introducing added flexibility and capacity into the Saltash DPD.

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for and on behalf of
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