

Five Year Housing Supply – Addressing the shortfall

This statement has been produced in order to ensure there is no misunderstanding of the application of planning policy in the determination of planning applications.

Over recent months there has been debate regarding the approach that Fylde Council should take in addressing the shortfall in housing delivery that has accrued during the local plan period (i.e. since 2011). There are two generally accepted approaches: the “Liverpool” approach which seeks to redress the shortfall over the entire plan period and the “Sedgefield” approach which seeks to address the shortfall over the next 5 years. In accordance with paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Guidance, the ability to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites is an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications and appeals.

The methodology recommended to the council having regard to guidance given in the Government’s Planning Practice Guidance is the Sedgefield approach. This approach has been considered and endorsed by the Development Management Committee at its meeting on 9 March 2016, when the committee resolved:

... to recommend to Full Council to continue using the “Sedgefield approach” in the calculation of the 5 year housing land supply as it most closely reflects current Government guidance as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance having regard to the circumstances appertaining to Fylde borough.

This endorsement was in the context of a request by full council to consider the merits of the two approaches, prompted by a notice of motion to the council meeting.

As at 31 March, the Council’s land supply using the Sedgefield method of calculation equates to 4.8 years.

On 15 June 2016 the Development Management Committee considered the Publication Version of the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 which included a resolution:

*2. To approve the **policies** in the housing chapter (Chapter 10: Provision of Homes in Fylde) of the Publication version of the Local Plan for immediate use as ‘Interim Housing Policies’ for use by the Development Management Committee and for decisions determined under Delegated Authority by the Head of Planning. (Emphasis added)*

Whilst the supporting text in Chapter 10 refers to addressing the shortfall over the plan period, there is no reference to a preferred methodology contained within the policies themselves. As such the recommendation of 9 March is not affected by this decision.

When making its decision on a planning application, the committee must have regard to any material considerations, but the weight to be given to each material consideration is a matter for the committee. The recommendation of 9 March and the decision of 15 June are both capable of being material considerations in any planning application to which housing supply is relevant.

However, the committee recommendation of 9 March, set out fully in the report to that meeting, is that decisions based on the Sedgefield approach are more likely to be upheld in the event of an appeal. While the publication version of the local plan aspires towards using the Liverpool approach, it would

be unsafe to do so until the local plan has been the subject of an Examination in Public¹ and that approach has been accepted as being sound.

Accordingly, until greater weight can be afforded to the emerging Fylde Local Plan to 2032 the methodology preferred by Fylde Council is to address the shortfall over the immediate 5 year period in line with the “Sedgefield” approach as it is considered that this approach is more robust having regard to current circumstances. However, the Council will continue to review the approach taken having regard to local circumstances and best practice.

¹ See Development Management Committee 9 March 2016, Item 4, Para 16.