



B O S T O N B O R O U G H C O U N C I L

REPORT TO:	Planning Committee
DATE:	28 th May 2019
SUBJECT:	Assessment of 5-year housing land supply
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Not known at time of issue of agenda.
REPORT AUTHOR:	Simon Eldred
EXEMPT REPORT?	No

SUMMARY

Since the publication of the first version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012, the Government has required local planning authorities to “identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing against their housing requirement”. The Borough Council has sought to fulfil this requirement by producing an ‘Assessment of 5-year Housing Land Supply’ at least once per year and, in all, thirteen such documents have been produced. Thus far, all of the Assessments have concluded that the Council did not have a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

The latest Assessment (based on the position as at 31st March 2019) is the first to conclude that the Council has a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. This report seeks to bring this fact to the Committee’s attention, and invites the Committee to approve the document for publication.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Planning Committee:

1. notes the contents of the ‘Assessment of 5-year housing land supply as at 31st March 2019’ (see Appendix to this report); and
2. approves the document for publication.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

It is considered to be important that the Planning Committee should be aware of the fact that the latest Assessment demonstrates a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, because this is of fundamental importance to how the Borough Council should deal with residential planning applications.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Assessments are largely factual documents and past versions have not been brought to the Planning Committee for approval, and the latest version could have been dealt with in the same way. However, the findings of this Assessment are radically different to those of its predecessors (with different implications for how residential planning applications should be dealt with).

REPORT

Background

- 1.1 The publication of the Government's first National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in March 2012 introduced the concept of a 'five-year land supply', i.e. a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of housing against a housing requirement (derived from adopted Local Plan policies, or from a local housing need figure).
- 1.2 The NPPF required local planning authorities to "identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement". The Borough Council has fulfilled this requirement by producing an 'Assessment of 5-year Housing Land Supply' at least once per year. These documents have:
 - a. identified all sites on which new homes are likely to be built over the following 5 years, i.e.
 - i. sites where development has already begun;
 - ii. sites with full planning permission;
 - iii. sites with outline planning permission;
 - iv. sites where there is a resolution to grant planning permission;
 - v. sites which are allocated in a Local Plan; and
 - vi. sites which are identified in a Brownfield Land Register;
 - b. compared these numbers to the number of dwellings required; and
 - c. identified whether or not there are enough sites to meet the needs.

In total, the Borough Council has published thirteen Assessments of 5-year Housing Land Supply, all of which have demonstrated that the Council did not have a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

- 1.3 If a local planning authority could not demonstrate a five-year land supply, the NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which enables the development of alternative sites to meet the policy requirement. Members will recall that, over the last few years, many planning applications on sites which were not supported by the provisions of the adopted Boston Borough Local Plan (April 1999) have been brought to the Committee with a recommendation of approval as a consequence of the lack of a five-year supply.

The position as at 31st March 2019

- 2.1 The Appendix to this report sets out an 'Assessment of 5-year housing land supply as at 31st March 2019', which identifies that:
- 1,840 new dwellings are required to be delivered between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2024;
 - deliverable housing sites can be identified which will provide 2,014 new homes over that period;
 - Boston Borough can therefore identify 5.5 years' supply of deliverable housing sites as at 31st March 2019.
- 2.2 This is the first Assessment to arrive at this conclusion, and there are four factors behind this change in circumstances, namely:
- housing development has been relatively buoyant over the last three financial years;
 - because there has been no under delivery of housing over the last three years, the use of a 5% buffer (rather than the 20% used in previous Assessments) is justified;
 - the adoption of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036 on 8th March 2019, which means that:
 - some of the Housing Allocations identified in the Plan can now be counted as deliverable; and
 - the Plan identifies that past shortfalls in completions should be dealt with over the remaining 17 years of the Plan-period; and
 - many of the planning permissions granted over the last few years when the Council could not demonstrate a 5-year supply can be counted as being deliverable.
- 2.3 The Assessment's findings have important implications for how the Borough Council should deal with planning applications for new housing sites. Previously (without a five year supply of housing land) the Council's policies for delivering housing were considered to be out-of-date. Thus, instead of planning applications being decided based on the provisions of local policies, national policies instead took precedence. This meant that, as long as a site could be considered as 'sustainable development', planning permission should be granted even if the Local Plan's provisions suggested otherwise. With a five year supply of housing land, the Borough Council is now at liberty to refuse planning permission for housing proposals that do not accord with the provisions of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036.

CONCLUSION

- 3.1 This Assessment is the first to conclude that the Borough Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. This has important implications for the way the Council should deal with planning applications for residential development.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

LEGAL & EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

None

ANY OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATION

None

APPENDICES

Boston Borough Council Assessment of 5-year housing land supply as at 31st March 2019.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.