

Matter 3 Hearing Statement

Date: 14th May 2019

Respondent Number: PS032

For: Persimmon Homes Midlands

Issue 1: Soundness of the approach towards the supply and delivery of housing land

Q11: Is Policy HO8 justified and consistent with national policy, with respect to the specific requirements relating to market housing, affordable housing, housing standards, and specialist accommodation?

- 1.1 Policy HO8 is not sound because it is not consistent with national policy nor is it justified through the plan's evidence base. The policy seeks to apply the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS) to all new build residential development in the District. Government guidance is clear that adoption of the housing standards is optional and that local planning authorities need to gather evidence to determine whether there is a need for additional standards in their area, and justify setting the appropriate policies.¹
- 1.2 The question of need is therefore key and it was clearly not the intention of the Government for the NDSS to be introduced uniformly across the country but only where there is justification. The evidence the Council have gathered in relation to the NDSS does not make the case for need as indicated by paragraph 6.5.12 of the supporting text to Policy HO8 which states that residents of Daventry already enjoy adaptable living space in their individual homes most of which already meet or exceed the proposed space standards.
- 1.3 The statement in the supporting text is confirmed in other parts of the evidence base. The November 2017 Viability Report (GEN01) conducted an extensive audit of new build residential properties sold in the District over the previous three years set out in Appendix 4 to that report. From this extensive evidence paragraph 5.2.13 of the Viability Report states

¹ Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 56-002-20160519

“the average unit sizes of new houses in Daventry District has been exceeding the minimum sizes for the prescribed NSS...”

- 1.4 Despite the Viability Report’s comprehensive consideration of a wide sample of homes amounting to around 750 individual dwellings sold over a two to three year period the Council has prepared further evidence in its Housing Background Paper V3, December 2018 (HOU1). This looked at a much more limited sample of only 231 properties. Although the Housing Background Paper looks over a wider timespan, the entries listed in Appendix 1 are not dated so it is impossible to tell how comprehensive the sample is in this regard.
- 1.5 The headline conclusion of the Housing Background Paper is that whilst 1 and 4+ bedroom dwellings perform well against the NDSS, around 50% of the two and three bedroom dwellings analysed did not meet the NDSS. However, this paints too simplistic of a picture and there has been no analysis as to how far below the NDSS the non-compliant units fell. Persimmon has carried out this exercise in Appendix 1 to this statement in relation to the non-compliant two and three bedroom properties in the Council’s sample.²
- 1.6 The results suggest that the non-compliant 2 bedroom properties **fell only 10.9% below the NDSS standard on average**. The non-compliant 3 bedroom properties **fell only 8% below the NDSS standard on average**. So whilst it is correct to say that the Council’s sample shows around 50% of two and three bedroom properties falling below the NDSS, the shortfall in terms of actual floor space is not material. Across the entire sample no one property fell further than 22% below the NDSS.
- 1.7 To give an indication of the limited scale of the shortfall the cumulative NDSS floor space requirement of the 23 non-complaint two bedroom properties is approximately 1,682 sq m of floor space. The cumulative floor space actually delivered was 1,490 resulting in a difference of 192 sq m or a shortfall of only 8.3 sq m per dwelling. Of the 32 non-compliant three bedroom properties, there is a cumulative difference of 228 sq m or 7.1 sq m per dwelling.
- 1.8 When looked at in combination with other parts of the evidence base which acknowledges that on the whole the market is already delivering dwellings at a standard at or near the NDSS it is clear that the proposed introduction of the NDSS is superfluous. The need for the NDSS in Daventry District has not been credibly established and the associated requirement should be deleted from Policy HO8 for plan soundness.
- 1.9 Policy HO8 also requires that 45% of market dwellings be built to M4(2) with a further 5% to M4(3) of the Building Regulations. In terms of affordable housing it

² Persimmon carried out a similar exercise in its Regulation 19 representations in respect of Housing Topic Paper Version 2 (July 2018)

requires that 40% be constructed to M4(2) standards and a further 10% to M4(3) of the Building Regulations.

- 1.10 In common with the NDSS, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) does not envisage that the enhanced accessibility standards would be introduced across the country as a matter of course. The PPG sets out the evidence that LPAs should rely on when seeking to introduce enhanced accessibility standards (ID 56-005 to 56-001). The evidence includes consideration of:
- The likely future need
 - The size, location, type and quality of dwellings needed
 - The accessibility and adaptability of the existing stock
 - Variations in need across different housing tenures; and
 - Viability
- 1.11 Referring to the Housing Background Paper (HOU1) it is evident that the Council's evidence for requiring enhanced accessibility standards is based on demographic projections which illustrate an aging population. However, an aging population is a national trend and if this alone was sufficient to justify the introduction of enhanced accessibility standards then the Government would have made these a mandatory part of the Building Regulations.
- 1.12 In order to consider the planning policy response to its aging population, the Northamptonshire local authorities commissioned the Study of Housing and Support Needs of Older People Across Northamptonshire dated March 2017 (HOU3). This document notes introduction of enhanced accessibility standards must be evidenced by need and other factors set out in the relevant guidance (Page 102). It does not seek to set out such evidence nor does it appear to specifically recommend the adoption of enhanced accessibility standards as a planning policy response the County's aging population. Rather, the report states that targets should be set out in local plans to meet specific housing requirements such as retirement housing, care homes, and dementia care homes.
- 1.13 This recommendation has been carried through to Limb E of Policy HO8 which encourages the provision of specialist accommodation with an emphasis on independent living. Limb E of Policy HO8 is positive and proactive, but there has been no consideration of how this limb of Policy HO8 would diminish the quantitative need for older persons housing throughout the plan period. There has similarly been no analysis of the adaptability of the existing housing stock which is clearly relevant given the plan's assertion at paragraph 6.5.12 of the supporting text that

"A key asset of the District, particularly in comparison to more urbanised areas, is the space that exists to give new residents a high quality of life with adaptable living space within their homes and adequate amenity space outside."

- 1.14 In relation to the M4(3) standard specifically, the Housing Background Paper (HOU1) models the need for wheelchair accessible homes but there is no consideration of how this need is already met by existing stock and planned provision over the plan period. Furthermore, the Study of Housing and Support Needs of Older People Across Northamptonshire dated March 2017 (HOU3) sets out that there is a “significant stock of retirement bungalows for social rent” in Northamptonshire and that the County’s social housing stock for older persons “is generally fit for purpose.” (Page 30). Again there is a need to consider how need is already met by existing and planned provision rather than simply extrapolating from the demographic projections and this would be in line with the approach envisaged in the PPG.
- 1.15 In conclusion Policy HO8 Limb D i), ii), and iii) are not sound as they are not consistent with national policy nor are they justified. They should be deleted from the plan.

Word count: 1,298

Appendix 1: Shortfall of Non-Compliant Units Against NDSS Standards

Location	Developer	Size	NDSS Standard	Difference
Two Bed				
Brampton Lane, Broughton	MGH	60	61	1.60%
Monksmoor, Daventry (P1)	Crest	60	61	1.60%
Monksmore, Daventry (P1)	Crest	58	61	4.90%
Broughton Road, Moulton	DWH	65	70	7.10%
Brampton Lane, Broughton	Bloor	63	70	10%
Brampton Lane, Broughton	Bloor	61	70	12.80%
Byfield Road, Woodford Halse	TW	60.91	70	12.90%
Daventry Road, Kilsby	Avant	60	70	14%
Daventry Road, Kilsby	Avant	56	70	20%
Daventry Road, Kilsby	Avant	60	70	14%
Main Road, Crick	Barratt	57	70	18%
Station Road, Long Buckby	Bovis	62	70	11%
Boughton Road, Moulton	DWH	70	79	11%
Main Road, Crick	Barratt	68	79	13%
Main Road, Crick	Barratt	66	79	16%
Monksmoor, P1	Crest	61	79	22%
Monksmoor, P1	Crest	72	79	8%
Monksmoor, Phase 4A	Crest	77	79	2.50%
Newlands Road, Welford	Mears	71	79	10%
Northampton College	Avant	67	79	15%
Northampton Lane South, Moulton	Diocean	76	79	3.70%
Northampton Lane South, Moulton	Diocean	64	79	18%
Poachears Close, Welgrave	Northants Rural	76	79	3.70%
Total / Average		1490.91	1682	10.90%
Three Bed				
Boughton Road, Moulton	DWH	92	93	1%
Broughton Road, Moulton	DWH	86	93	7.50%
Brampton Lane, Boughton	Bloor	85	93	8.60%
Brampton Lane, Boughton	Bloor	89	93	4.30%
Brampton Lane, Boughton	Bloor	87	93	6.40%
Brampton Lane, Boughton	Bloor	88	93	5.30%
Brampton Lane, Boughton	Bloor	89	102	12.70%
Brampton Lane, Boughton	MGH	91	93	2.10%
Brampton Lane, Boughton	MGH	88	93	5.30%

Byfield Road, Woodford Halse	TW	80.5	93	13.40%
Byfield Road, Woodford Halse	TW	84.6	93	9%
Main Road, Crick	Barratt	78	93	16%
Main Road, Crick	Barratt	85	93	8.60%
Main Road, Crick	Barratt	86	93	7.50%
Main Road, Crick	Barratt	94	93	
Monksmoor	Crest	81	86	5.80%
Monksmoor	Crest	89	93	4.30%
Monksmoor	Crest	89	93	4.30%
Monksmoor	Crest	82	93	11.80%
Monksmoor	Crest	81	93	12.90%
Monksmoor	Crest	84	93	9.60%
Monksmoor	Crest	102	108	5.50%
Monksmoor	Crest	87	102	14.70%
Monksmoor	Crest	92	93	1%
Monksmoor	Crest	88	93	5.37%
Newlands Road, Welford	Mears	84	93	9.60%
Northampton College, Daventry	Avant	86	93	7.50%
Northampton Lane, South	Diocean	83	84	1.10%
Land off Poachers Close, Walgrave	Whiterock	91	93	2.10%
Poachers Close, Walgrave	Northants Rural	87	93	6.45%
Station Road, Long Buckby	Bovis	79	93	15%
Station Road, Long Buckby	Bovis	91	93	2.10%
Station Road, Long Buckby	Bovis	79	93	15.10%
Total / Average		2858.1	3086	8%