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# East Cambridgeshire Local Plan

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Local Plan Examination  
Hearings Statement – Week 2  
Matters 3 and 4

On behalf of  
Barratt David Wilson Homes Eastern Counties  
Respondent Ref. 1148400



## Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Matter 3: Objectively Assessed Needs for Housing and Employment Land	2
3.	Matter 4: Housing and employment land requirement	6



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Hearings Statement has been prepared by Savills (UK) Limited on behalf of Barratt David Wilson Homes Eastern Counties ('BDW').
- 1.2. Savills will attend the Hearing sessions on Matters 3 and 4 to expand on the representations made to the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Local Plan (PSLP) consultation by Barton Willmore on behalf of BDW, and the content of this Statement.

## 2. Matter 3: Objectively Assessed Needs for Housing and Employment Land

*Issue 1: Whether the Council's approach to calculating its full, objectively assessed needs is justified, based on up-to-date and reliable evidence, effective, positively prepared, and consistent with national policy?*

### Objectively Assessed Need

**Question 20: What is the implication of there being a different time period for housing need and employment growth? What is the justification?**

- 2.1. The PSLP is intended to cover the period 2016-2036, hence figures for both housing needs and employment growth should relate to this period, even if the evidential basis for them relates to a different period. To do otherwise is to complicate matters unnecessarily at the outset; given that both 2014 and 2016 have already passed there is no reason, or justification, for the periods to be different.

### Housing

**Question 24: Is the Council's use of the standard methodology to determine local housing need, referred to within the consultation draft of the National Planning Policy Framework, justified, positively prepared, effective, consistent with national policy, and an appropriate alternative methodology to that set out within the Planning Practice Guidance?**

- 2.2. The NPPF requires (para. 47) that Local Planning Authorities ('LPAs') identify the objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing (the 'OAN' or 'OAHN') in their housing market area ('HMA'), and then prepare their Local Plan to ensure that full OAN (the 'FOAHN'), so far as is consistent with the NPPF when read as a whole.
- 2.3. The proposed housing requirement in the PSLP is not based on an OAN, but the proposed replacement method – the 'standard method' of determining the Local Housing Need ('LHN'). Simply, the proposed standard method is not an OAN but the application of a affordability uplift to household projections.
- 2.4. There is no apparent reason or justification for the Council to base the housing requirement in the PSLP on the emerging standard method. This is contrary to current national planning policy and practice guidance, as reinforced by legal judgements.
- 2.5. The PPG contains detailed guidance (ID: 2a-001 to 2a-029) on how to undertake an OAN. It explains (ID: 2a-005) that the guidance is followed unless the LPA has "particular local circumstances" for adopting a different approach.
- 2.6. The only 'particular local circumstances' that the Council has provided for departing from the current guidance in the PPG is (PS.EVR2 para. 2.1) that the 'new' standard method for determining LHN should be used in place of the 'old' local method of calculating an OAN.

- 2.7. This is incorrect. The proposed standard method approach is only a consultation proposal and has not (yet) been introduced as national policy. If the standard method is introduced it will be accompanied by a revised NPPF and PPG, none of which the Council has seemingly considered when deciding to use the standard method to determine its housing need (indeed the proposed versions to the NPPF and PPG had not even been published for consultation when the Council submitted the PSLP for examination).
- 2.8. Notably, the recent consultation on the revisions to the NPPF and PPG propose that the standard method would not be applicable to Plans submitted within six months of the revisions being introduced – in other words, any Plans submitted for Examination before the end of 2018 (or thereabouts) will fall to be examined against the requirement for an OAN.
- 2.9. In summary, the Council's proposed use of the standard methodology to determine the local housing need is not justified, positively prepared, or consistent with national policy. It will (for reasons discussed below) not be effective, and it is not an appropriate alternative methodology to that set out within the PPG.

**Question 25: How does this methodology compare in absolute numerical terms to the more traditional approach set out within the Planning Practice Guidance and which has been followed within the October 2016 Objectively Assessed Housing Need paper (PE6)? What is the Council's reason to alter its approach to the calculation of its objectively assessed need between the publication of the Further Draft Local Plan in February 2017 and the Proposed Submission version of November 2017?**

- 2.10. The Council's OAHN update (October 2016) (PE06) identifies a OAHN of 12,900 for East Cambridgeshire between 2014 and 2036 (22 years) – an average of 586 dpa. Taking into account delivery to date of 577 dwellings between 2014 and 2017, there remains an undelivered need of **12,323 dws** for the period 2017 and 2036 (19 years), an average of **649 dpa** (using the 'Liverpool' approach).
- 2.11. To this should be added the additional market signals / affordability uplift identified by Barton Willmore in representations submitted to emerging Local Plan of some 5,300 dws over the period 2014 to 2036, which would result in a revised FOAHN of some 18,200 dws, an average of 826 dpa. Taking into account delivery to date, there remains an undelivered need of **17,625 dws** for the period 2017 to 2036, an average of **928 dpa**.
- 2.12. The standard method approach, as consulted on recently by the Government, would require a minimum requirement of **598 dpa** between 2016 and 2026, or a total of 11,960 dws, with this requirement being rolled forward for 2026 to 2036 but subject to review after no more than five years. Taking into account delivery to date, there would remain an undelivered need of **11,385 dws** for the period 2017 to 2036, an average of **599 dpa**.
- 2.13. For comparison, the need determined by the standard method route is a total of **950 dws**, or **50 dpa**, less than that identified in PE06, notwithstanding the additional uplift proposed by Barton Willmore.
- 2.14. We discuss the implications of the proposed redirection of 1,125 dws to Peterborough under Matter 4, Question 32 below.

- 2.15. The reason for the Council altering its approach between the February 2017 and November 2017 drafts of the Local Plan appears to be either: a) a complete misunderstanding and misapplication of the emerging standard method approach to determining LHN, or b) an inadvisable and unjustified application of the new standard method for calculating the LHN, as this would result in a lower requirement that identified in PE06.

**Question 26: Is it appropriate that PE6, which forms part of the Council's evidence base, relies on a district wide update of the relevant element of the 2013 SHMA, which covers the whole of the Cambridge Housing Market Area? Does the geographical extent of the HMA still remain appropriate and justified? Does the continued reliance on the wider 2013 SHMA remain consistent with the advice within the PPG, 'that local authorities should co-ordinate future housing reviews so they take place at the same time', given that it informed the adopted Local Plan, which the submitted plan seeks to replace?**

- 2.16. The Council does not appear to be relying on the 2013 SHMA, or for that matter PE06. The PSLP sets the baseline for the calculation of LHN as described in Section 3.3 as the standard method figure of 11,960 homes; all reference to the SHMA is cast aside after para. 3.3.2.
- 2.17. To the extent that the PSLP relies on the emerging standard method, Savills cannot understand why the Council has included documentation relating to the SHMA, or much of the content of PE06, as part of its' submitted evidence base.
- 2.18. As discussed above, the Council should not be using the standard method approach and should be identifying a FOAHN and seeking to meet that in full.
- 2.19. Despite the guidance in the PPG, the PSLP remains out-of-step with some of the other Plans within the HMA.

**Question 27: Are the housing figures and assumptions contained within PE6, robust and justified? Do they take into account recent DCLG household projections, appropriate market signals, forecast jobs growth and the need for adequate levels of affordable housing to be provided? Has an allowance been made for vacancy rates and second homes with reference to existing and future housing stock?**

- 2.20. Insofar as they relate to the calculation of an OAN, the housing figures and assumptions contained in PE06 are neither robust nor justified for the reasons set out in the representations submitted to the emerging Local Plan by Barton Willmore, to the extent that the FOAHN should be increased by 5,300 dws over the period 2014 to 2036, which would result in a revised FOAHN of some 18,200 dws, an average of 826 dpa (see Question 25 above).

**Question 28: What assessment has taken place of the needs of particular groups, by household size, type and tenure, including self-build and custom housebuilding? What assumptions have been made to calculate the need for specialist housing types, for example, housing for older people and students, and for households with specific needs, to ensure that the appropriate level of need is made explicit within the plan to enable provision and delivery of the required levels and type of housing? Does the housing figure require any amendment to cater for these needs?**

- 2.21. The Council's background Evidence Report PS-EVR6 notes (para. 4.11) the requirement within the NPPF (para. 50) that: "... local planning authorities should ... plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes) ..." and discusses this and the associated guidance in the PPG, but then concludes (para. 4.16): "... it is clear that Government intends to 'do something' about homes for the elderly, but at this stage it is not clear exactly what. This will only become clear once new national policy on this matter is published, and we are unlikely to know what this is until the NPPF is published later this year." In the interim it appears that the Council has left this matter essentially unaddressed.
- 2.22. The 'Vision' in the PSLP (Section 2.2) includes that: "The needs of elderly, young and lower-paid people will receive special attention." Under the heading of 'housing', the PSLP includes (paras. 4.3.9 to 4.3.15) a discussion regarding the needs of certain specialist needs, but Policy LP6 only sets out general support for provision to meet their needs. The PSLP includes no specific provisions to ensure that the needs for specialist housing types are met other than requiring a percentage of dwellings as affordable housing and a percentage with higher access standards.
- 2.23. In summary, the PSLP fails to adequately consider or address the needs for specialist housing types or households with specific needs, as required by the NPPF. In this sense it is not positively prepared, will not be effective, and is not consistent with national policy.

### 3. Matter 4: Housing and employment land requirement

*Issue 1: Whether the Council's approach to calculating its housing and employment requirements is justified, based on up-to-date and reliable evidence, effective, positively prepared, and consistent with national policy?*

#### Housing

**Question 30. Is the identified overall housing requirement of 10,835 dwellings or 542 per annum (dpa) over the plan period justified and consistent with national policy?**

- 3.1. No.
- 3.2. As discussed in relation to Matter 3, Question 24, the NPPF requires (para. 47) that Local Planning Authorities ('LPAs') identify the objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing (the 'OAN' or 'OAHN') in their housing market area ('HMA'), and then prepare their Local Plan to ensure that full OAN (the 'FOAHN'), so far as is consistent with the NPPF when read as a whole.
- 3.3. The proposed housing requirement in the PSLP is not based on an OAN, but the proposed replacement method – the 'standard method' of determining the Local Housing Need ('LHN'). Simply, the proposed standard method is not an OAN but the application of a affordability uplift to household projections.
- 3.4. There is no apparent reason or justification for the Council to base the housing requirement in the PSLP on the emerging standard method. This is contrary to current national planning policy and practice guidance, as reinforced by legal judgements.
- 3.5. The PPG contains detailed guidance (ID: 2a-001 to 2a-029) on how to undertake an OAN. It explains (ID: 2a-005) that the guidance is followed unless the LPA has "particular local circumstances" for adopting a different approach.
- 3.6. The only 'particular local circumstances' that the Council has provided for departing from the current guidance in the PPG is (PS.EVR2 para. 2.1) that the 'new' standard method for determining LHN should be used in place of the 'old' local method of calculating an OAN.
- 3.7. This is incorrect. The proposed standard method approach is only a consultation proposal and has not (yet) been introduced as national policy. If the standard method is introduced it will be accompanied by a revised NPPF and PPG, none of which the Council has seemingly considered when deciding to use the standard method to determine its housing need (indeed the proposed versions to the NPPF and PPG had not even been published for consultation when the Council submitted the PSLP for examination).
- 3.8. Notably, the recent consultation on the revisions to the NPPF and PPG propose that the standard method would not be applicable to Plans submitted within six months of the revisions being introduced – in other words, any Plans submitted for Examination before the end of 2018 (or thereabouts) will fall to be examined against the requirement for an OAN.

- 3.9. Notwithstanding that the Council does not use it to calculate the housing requirement in the PSLP, PE06 does not review or consider the OAN for the HMA, hence the Council cannot be in any way certain that the PSLP will ensure that the full OAN for housing (the 'FOAHN') across the HMA to 2036.
- 3.10. In short (as discussed above – Matter 3, Question 24), the baseline LHN of 11,960 dws, being based on the emerging standard method, is not justified, positively prepared, or consistent with national policy. It will not be effective, and it is not an appropriate alternative methodology to that set out within the PPG.
- 3.11. In addition, as discussed below (Question 32) the proposed redirection of 1,125 (or 1,500) dws to Peterborough is not justified and will not be effective in ensuring housing delivery.
- 3.12. Further, as also discussed below (Question 33) the proposed provision for 210 dws to be delivered on Community Land Trust sites is likewise not justified and will not be effective in ensuring housing delivery.
- 3.13. In summary, the proposed housing requirement of 10,835 dwellings or 542 dpa is not justified or positively prepared, will not be effective in ensuring housing delivery, and is not consistent with national policy.

**Question 31. Do either of the two parts of the second bullet point within Paragraph 14 of the Framework apply to meeting East Cambridgeshire's objectively assessed needs? If so, how?**

- 3.14. There is no justifiable basis for East Cambridgeshire not to meet its FOAHN; there are no adverse impacts that would arise from meeting the FOAHN that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.
- 3.15. The only such balancing exercise undertaken by the Council is contained in the Sustainability Appraisal ('SA') (November 2017) (CD11A) which concludes that the higher housing growth option considered (Option 3) would (p23) "generally have negative effects" on the environment and resources. There is little, if any, evidence to support this conclusion, which notwithstanding the lack of evidence, falls far short of the NPPF test that the FOAHN should be met unless the impacts would "significantly and demonstrably" outweigh the benefits; the Council has seemingly never applied this test.
- 3.16. Equally, the Council has also not indicated at any stage that it cannot meet the FOAHN as a result of any specific policy / policies (aka 'footnote 9' policies) in the NPPF; indeed there are no specific policies in the NPPF that indicate that development should be restricted in a manner that justifies not meeting the FOAHN.
- 3.17. In summary, the two parts of the second bullet point within para. 14 of the NPPF do not apply to East Cambridgeshire's requirement to meet the FOAHN, and the FOAHN should be met in full.

**Question 32. What is the justification to discount the OAN figure by 1,125 dwellings and to rely on Peterborough to contribute to the delivery of East Cambridgeshire's needs? What evidence is there that Peterborough has previously delivered the housing needs of East Cambridgeshire, and will continue to do so, and when?**

- 3.18. As discussed above (Matter 3, Question 24), the basis for Peterborough meeting 1,500 dws of East Cambridgeshire's housing requirement over the period 2011-2031 was twofold (PE02, Appendix 1, para. 3.6):
- That East Cambridgeshire had progressed its (2015) Local Plan and had a good understanding of development constraints and opportunities; and
  - That locating development in and close to Cambridge and Peterborough, and not elsewhere within East Cambridgeshire, would secure sustainable development and avoid dispersed development.
- 3.19. However, there is nothing in the PSLP to demonstrate that the FOAHN cannot be accommodated within East Cambridgeshire. Likewise, there is nothing to demonstrate that meeting the FOAHN in East Cambridgeshire would result in either an unsustainable form of development or such a dispersed pattern of development as to be unacceptable in planning terms.
- 3.20. Housing delivery in East Cambridgeshire since 2011 has been woefully inadequate. The adopted 2015 Local Plan sets a requirement for an average of 575 dpa. However, over the six-year period 2011-2017 only 1,424 dwellings were delivered, an average of 237 dpa (M02B – AMR 2016-17, Oct 2017, Table 2). Over the past three years 2014 to 2017, delivery has been just 577 dwellings – essentially one years' worth of supply delivered in three years (or a delivery rate of just 33%), at a time of good demand for housing.
- 3.21. Indeed, housing delivery in East Cambridgeshire is so bad that it stands to be one of the first LPAs in the country to which the harshest consequences of the proposed Housing Delivery Test will become applicable.
- 3.22. Peterborough's Local Plan was submitted for examination on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and thus remains untested. It identifies (Table 2, para. 14) a total LHN of 18,840 dws for the period 2016 to 2036, an average of 942 dpa, and proposes a housing requirement of 21,315 dws over the period, an average of 1,066 dpa (including the redirection of 1,125 dws from East Cambridgeshire, 750 dws from Fenland and 600 dws of student accommodation).
- 3.23. The adopted Peterborough Core Strategy (2011) sets a requirement for 1,497 dpa (a total requirement of 25,450 dws over the period 2009 to 2026). Deducting the included redirection of 2,500 dws from Fenland and East Cambridgeshire over the period 2011 to 2031, the average annual requirement for Peterborough to meet its own housing needs is 1,350 dws (a total requirement of 22,950 dws). Between 2011 and 2017 housing delivery in Peterborough has totalled 5,840 dws (Peterborough Authority Monitoring Report 2017, Figure 1), an average of just 973 dpa – less than required to meet Peterborough's own needs and thus a failure to provide any of the housing needs redirected from East Cambridgeshire.
- 3.24. On this basis, Savills cannot see how any reliance can be placed on Peterborough to deliver the 1,125 dws that the PSLP proposes, and this figure should be added to the requirement to be provided for within East Cambridgeshire itself. Indeed, the Council's suggestion that 25% of the 1,500 dws that were to be provided in Peterborough can now be deducted from the requirement is entirely unjustified as it is clear that these dwellings have not been provided.

**Question 33. The soundness of individual site allocations will be considered at Stage 2 of the Examination, and I will not be considering individual site allocations in any detail at this stage. However, is the assumption that 1060 dwellings will be delivered over the plan period as a result of windfall developments and unallocated Community Land Trust sites realistic and justified by evidence?**

- 3.25. Housing delivery from unallocated Community Land Trust (CLT) sites, practical housing delivery from these has yet to be properly tested.
- 3.26. In January 2017, the Council estimated (this document has not been submitted with the PSLP) (EB032, 5YHLS Report, Appendix 2, Table D / p56) that CLT sites would deliver 403 dws between 2017/18 and 2024/25, with 80 included in the 5YHLS, and a total of 500 over the plan period.
- 3.27. Yet in October 2017, the Council estimated (M03, 5YHLS Statement, Appendix 2, Table 12 / para. 8.5) that CLT sites would deliver just 190 dws between 2018/19 and 2024/25, with none included in the 5YHLS, and a total of only 210 over the plan period.
- 3.28. Over the course of 9 months, the Council's own estimation of delivery from CLT sites has reduced by up to c. 60%, depending on the figures compared. This serves to demonstrate just how unsure the Council itself is regarding delivery from such sites. Savills contends that, with a view to boosting the supply of housing, the only reasonable course of action would be not to take account of supply from CLT sites as a component of meeting the minimum housing requirement for East Cambridgeshire.
- 3.29. To do otherwise would appear to be the planning equivalent of crossing ones fingers, and certainly not a sound basis for preparing a Local Plan.

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