

## **FURTHER STATEMENT REF MATTER 3, HOUSING NEEDS Q1, Q2 AND Q6**

I believe the first 5 years of the Plan, ref EX /HBC / 57, with its proposed delivery of houses well in excess of those required, is open to question, for the following reasons.

- 2686 dwellings is the target, commensurate with an estimated population increase of 1000 (linearly interpolated from the predicted population increase of 2014-2037 of 5.2%) and an estimated 220 net migrants (based on 290 jobs growth per annum for Hartlepool, of which 15% would be jobs led) over the 5 year period. Factor in the estimated dwellings required to account for demolition, equivalent to 130 pa, and it is apparent that the number of dwellings required would be approximately 1400. Even if allowance was made for an under delivery of 248 dwellings (which is currently open to debate) for the period 2016/17, to be absorbed in the first 5 years, the figure could only be as high as 1650. Finally factor in the 20% buffer as per NPPF guidelines (currently in dispute and open to debate) and the absolute worst case scenario total would be an estimated 1980 dwellings, thereby providing ample opportunity to reduce the housing target to be in sync with demonstrable demand. The importance of striking the right balance between supply and demand over the first 5 years cannot be over emphasized. Overdeveloping, without any tangible, empirical evidence base, cannot be justified, and should pay due cognizance to the potential for creating unsustainable sites turning into dust bowls.
- Ref OAN methodology (SHMA 2015), in my opinion the OAN was based on a very low sample of respondees to the questionnaire sent out by ARC to local residents in 2014. There were 19063 survey forms sent out to which 2087 replied. This out of a total number of inhabited properties of 40631, effectively 5.1%. A lot of the findings were based on questions concerning people's "aspirations" and "expectations", thereby inviting fanciful responses rather than realistic objectives. ARC stated that the number of responses required was well in excess of the 1500 specified in former Government SHMA Guidance, 2007. I now understand that there is a Government White Paper with proposals for a standard methodology for calculating OAN, which I hope will get discussed at the Examination Hearing.
- No numerical credit has been taken for properties on the open market. As I was at pains to point out in my letter regarding the LP Publication Stage, Hartlepool is a buyer's market, with housing supply palpably exceeding demand. In 2016, in Hartlepool, 36% of houses bought before 2008 were sold for less than their purchase price. In 2016, NE England was the worst area in the UK for this problem, and Hartlepool the worst place in the NE (Sunday Times, 29/01/2017). Hardly a ringing endorsement for an open door planning policy.
- In conclusion, the people of Hartlepool in general, and the Rural West area in particular, are extremely disenchanting with their voice not being heard. A disproportionate allocation of Planning applications being sought, and being granted, in the Rural West area, as a result of slavish adherence to NPPF guidelines, has ensued. NPPF guidelines do allow a certain latitude for localism to prevail, but any precedent for this has yet to be forthcoming. The fundamental tenet of "Presumption in favour of sustainable development", and its interpretation, provides a comfortable conduit through which local authorities and developers can operate.

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