



BRIEFING NOTE ON PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 3: HOUSING

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 PPS 3 was published in November 2006, replacing PPG 3 (Housing) but does not come into effect until 1 April 2007.
- 1.2 PPS 3 decentralises power to a local level by increasing opportunities for local planning authorities (LPA's) to set important areas of policy locally. The main objectives are to deliver high quality homes, both affordable and market housing,
 - widening opportunities for home ownership
 - to improve affordability by increasing the supply of housing
 - to create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities.
2. **Design Quality**
 - 2.1 High quality design is emphasised throughout the document, with it being fundamental to effective land use. The emphasis is greater than in PPG 3 particularly in more sensitive sites such as in Conservation Areas.
 - 2.2 Access to open space that is safe and secure is seen as a key requirement. Urban design becomes an even higher priority with a new emphasis on Design Codes. These documents will offer much more detail to developers and stakeholders on the type of development that will ultimately be secured. It should be noted that such documents are particularly time consuming to prepare. The Government has published a 'Code for Sustainable Homes' to assist this. Design which is inappropriate in its context or which fails to improve the character and quality of an area should not be accepted, suggesting a greater ability to resist inappropriate development within residential areas.
3. **Housing Mix and Affordable Housing**
 - 3.1 The Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) should specify the percentage of households requiring market or affordable housing as well as the size and type of affordable housing required. They should also identify the proportion of households requiring different types of housing, such as families and older people.
 - 3.2 The definition of affordable housing has been revised to exclude low cost market housing. This change is to be welcomed. However it sets out that local authorities also need to deliver low-cost market housing as part of the housing mix. The indicative minimum threshold above which affordable housing can be sought has been reduced to 15 dwellings.

The LDFs should set separate targets for social rented and intermediate housing. More detailed guidance on affordable housing is set out in a separate 'Affordable Housing Policy Statement'.

4. Housing Land Supply

- 4.1 PPS 3 requires development plan documents to provide a flexible supply of housing with a 15 year supply. This includes a 5 year supply which must be available for development, suitable and achievable.
- 4.2 The PPS envisages a project management approach to managing housing and land supply. It retains the 'plan, monitor and manage' approach to secure a more delivery focussed process. Policies and proposals will be expected to be drawn up on the basis of a robust evidence base and the LDF will need to clearly show how and when its proposals will be implemented. Annual Monitoring Reports will monitor progress in achieving this and indicate remedial action if needed.
- 4.3 The LDF will need to set out a housing implementation strategy that describes the approach to manage delivery of the housing and previously develop land targets and trajectories. This will include identifying and testing different options for delivery, undertaking risk assessments and developing contingency plans for dealing with poor performance in bringing forward an adequate supply of land.

5. Location of Housing

- 5.1 The emphasis remains upon developing sustainable brown fields sites. The national target of at least 60% of houses on previously developed land remains unchanged. The LDFs will need to set a local previously developed land target and trajectory for delivery, supported by a strategy for brownfield sites. The definition of previously developed (brownfield) land is unchanged.
- 5.2 PPS 3 sets out a variety of criteria which can be used to justify lower density levels rather than one broad 'catch all' density. The advice is subject to the need to ensure that such policies are developed with regard to the characteristics of an area. The emphasis on good design is once again cited as being critical to achieving appropriate higher density development, and the existing density and character of areas must not be used to dictate the density of new development.
- 5.3 Sustainability appraisals are required in drawing up policy and in site assessment. Reduction of carbon emissions from new development in terms of transportation/location, construction, building form and use of energy, is raised as a key consideration.

6. Parking

- 6.1 Whereas PPG3 set specific maximum parking standards, PPS3 requires Local Authorities to develop parking policies for their plan area in partnership with local stakeholders and local communities, taking into account car ownership, the efficient use of land and good design.

7. Extant Permissions

- 7.1 PPS 3 states that there is no presumption that permission should again be granted, on sites with unimplemented planning permissions, if the original permission did not deliver the policy objectives of PPS.3. Clearly this is intended to encourage the implementation of extant permissions, because it increases the risk of permissions not being renewed.

8. Conclusion and Implications

- 8.1 The main change in policy from the previous PPG3 is the much greater emphasis being placed on increasing the numbers of houses built. This makes it more likely that the housing figures to 2026 currently envisaged in the Regional Spatial Strategy Review will eventually be increased by the Secretary of State. The requirement to maintain a 5 year supply of land means that it will be a priority to review existing plans against this bench mark. Otherwise, the Council may lose planning appeals on sites it would prefer not to see developed, such as green wedges.
- 8.2 There is scope for planning policies to be more prescriptive in terms of housing mix, tenure and price range. This will require a sound evidence base in terms of a strategic housing market assessment. On affordable housing, the reduction in the minimum threshold to 15 dwellings should help to increase supply since this is below the 25 dwelling level set in the adopted Local Plan Review. The changes affect any decisions made after 1 April. It is possible that some decision notices relating to decisions made before 1 April will not be issued until after 1 April. Where this happens except in exceptional circumstances it would not intended to revisit the decision.
- 8.3 The increased emphasis on design quality is welcome. This should help to raise standards of development and to resist proposals that might harm the character of established areas. However, we will need to develop appropriate local design guidance to make the best use of this opportunity.
- 8.4 There is now more scope to develop locally sensitive policies on densities and the use of brownfield land, subject to these being fully justified. While this may help to resist inappropriate high density developments in some brownfield locations any consequent reduction in supply will result in a need to release more greenfield sites. The PPS should help us provide the right kind of homes in the right places.
- 8.5 It should be noted that the new requirements to prepare brownfield land and housing implementation strategies will have resource implications.

9. RECOMMENDATION:

- 9.1 To note the report

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – None