

Examination of the Braintree Section 2 Local Plan

Countryside Properties & Andrewsfield New Settlement Consortium

Matter 5: A Prosperous District – Homes

(Policy LPP17)

Question 1: Does BLP Section 2 and in particular Policy LPP 17 Housing Provision and Delivery demonstrate an adequate supply to meet Braintree’s housing requirement as set out in BLP Section 1 (14,320 new homes) and its timescale for delivery within the Plan period 2013-2033 ?

Answer 1:

Braintree District Council (BDC) published ‘Topic Paper 2 – Housing’ in April 2021 to support the BLP Section 2 Plan.

Countryside Properties (CP) and Andrewsfield New Settlement Consortium (ANSC) do not accept that a 5% housing land supply buffer should be applied, and that a 20% buffer should be applicable to the BLP Section 2 Plan.

It is apparent that BDC have included a large proportion (881 houses) of the required total 5-year supply where planning permissions have not been granted. In addition, a further 186 houses have been included in the projected supply relating to sites which only benefit from a resolution to grant planning permission. It is submitted that those sites not yet benefiting from planning permission should be excluded from the assessed housing land supply, thus reducing the housing supply level to less than 5 years on adoption in 2021/22. Furthermore, BDC has been assessing planning applications, as recently as February to March 2021, on the basis that the Authority is unable to identify a 5-year housing land supply.

It is therefore submitted that a 20% buffer must be applied to the BLP Section 2 Plan.

Paragraph 3.11 of Topic Paper 2 states that:

“...Work on the review of the Plan, which will start on adoption, will be on the basis of the Standard Methodology approach to definition of the housing target, either in its current form or in a revised form if that is introduced following on from the Planning White Paper.”

CP and ANSC fully support the need for a review of the Plan immediately following adoption of the section Plan. Clarity should therefore be provided on whether the Council intends to review only the section 2 Plan, or if the section 1 Plan will also be reviewed immediately following adoption of the section 2 Plan.

Notwithstanding the BDC position on this matter, CP and ANSC submit that a review will be necessary for both the BDC section 1 and 2 Plans, immediately following adoption of the section 2 Plan, so likely to commence in early 2022. The requirement for an immediate review of the BDC Local Plan will be to ensure that essential additional land can be identified, allocated, and released to meet short, medium and longer term housing requirements for Braintree throughout and beyond the section 1 Plan period, and also taking account of the significant pressures to deliver new homes within the wider housing market area , including for adjoining Districts such as Uttlesford and Chelmsford.

Where the Inspector agrees that the Authority should progress a review of the BDC section 2 Plan immediately on adoption of the Plan, then CP and ANSC request that this requirement is made through clear and specific wording within the section 2 Plan. Confirmation should also be provided that the review should relate to both the BDC section 1 and section 2 Plans thus allowing for identification and allocation of larger strategic sites, such as a potential new Garden Community, and including through joint working between authorities, providing a prolonged and consistent solution that will boost housing delivery within Braintree.

ANSC and CP remain fully committed to promotion of the West of Braintree Garden Community via the Braintree and Uttlesford Local Plan making process. It is submitted that an immediate review of the Braintree Local Plan to allow potential allocation of Garden Communities will reduce the number of speculative applications being submitted to both Braintree and Uttlesford in both the short and longer term.

Word Count (Answers 1): 578

June 2021