Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 78

REPLACEMENT

SUMMARY PROOF OF EVIDENCE

Of

Mr Chris Hemmings

BA(Hons), MSc, DipSurv, MRTPI, MRICS

GL Hearn on behalf of Eastleigh Borough Council

Land off Bubb Lane
Hedge End
Hampshire
SO30 2UN

PINS Reference APP/W1715/W/15/3063753

April 2016

1.1 My evidence (contained in my Main Proof of Evidence, a Corrigendum to that Proof, and this Summary Proof) deals with the housing supply and five year housing land supply position within Eastleigh Borough. It sets out the planning policy context, the sources of housing supply and the calculation of the five year housing land supply position, drawing on relevant planning decisions where necessary.

1.2 The starting point for the review of housing supply is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which at Paragraph 47 requires local planning authorities to update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of housing against their housing requirements, together with an appropriate additional buffer. Paragraph 48 of the NPPF makes clear that local planning authorities can make an allowance for windfall within their housing supply, where they have compelling evidence that such sites have been consistently available and will continue to be a reliable source of supply.

1.3 The Framework also states that for sites to be deemed 'deliverable', they need to be available now, offer a suitable location for development now, and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable.

1.4 Using data held by Hampshire County Council and Eastleigh Borough Council, the sources of housing supply that have been assessed are:

- **Existing Commitments** – which are small sites of 1-9 dwellings and sites of 10 or more dwellings with outline or full planning permission, and have either started on site or have yet to be implemented. For the calculation of the five year housing land supply, small sites have been discounted by 4% to take account of the proportion of planning permissions that have lapsed over a 9 year period from 2006/7-2014/15.

- **Sites Subject to Resolution to Grant Planning Permission** – which are sites of 10 or more dwellings that have a Planning Committee Resolution to Grant Planning Permission subject to the completion of legal agreements.

- **Developments Under Negotiation** – which are three sites that were previously proposed within the Eastleigh Local Plan 2011-2029 and maintain an 'in principle' level of support from the Council.

- **Windfall** – which is calculated on the basis of 59 dwellings per annum for Years 3, 4 and 5, and deemed to be a consistent source of homes from small sites that are not considered as part of the Council's Strategic Land Availability Assessment.

1.5 The total quantum of dwellings identified from these four sources of housing supply that are deliverable over the period 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2020 is 4,776 homes.

1.6 The Objectively Assessed Housing Need for the Borough that informs the five year housing land supply position is 590 dwellings per annum. This figure was adopted as an interim figure at Eastleigh Borough Council's Cabinet on 16 March 2016. The justification for the 590 dwellings per annum figure is provided in a Proof of Evidence written by Nick Ireland (a Planning Director at GL Hearn).

1.7 The number of completions from the start of the proposed Local Plan period of 1st April 2011 to 31st December 2015 is 1,501 homes, which equates to a shortfall of 1,302 dwellings. A review of past housing completions and the comments made by the Inspector at the Local Plan 2011-2029 Examination confirms that the Council has a persistent under-delivery of housing and therefore a 20% buffer should be added to the housing requirement in accordance with Paragraph 47 of the NPPF.

1.8 The question then arises as to how to apply the 20% buffer. There are two common methods - either the buffer is added to the housing requirement only, or it is added to the housing requirement and the shortfall. There is no formal guidance on this point, either within the NPPF or the PPG, and further, a review of planning decisions reveals evidence of both methods being endorsed by Inspectors and the Secretary of State.

1.9 The application of the buffer is a matter for the Inspector's judgement, but it should be recognised that the Council is making every effort to create a step change in the housing market and boost the supply of dwellings in accordance with the NPPF. In total, the Council has permitted in excess of 3,000 dwellings and resolved to permit over 1,000 dwellings. This is well in excess of the five year housing requirement. The shortfall of 1,302 in itself is considerable without adding another 260 units with the application of the 20% buffer. The annual requirement with the 20% buffer applied to the housing requirement and shortfall for the five years is over 1,000 dwellings. During the past 19 years (1996/97-2014/15), the Council has never delivered 1,000 units in one year, with the highest being 906 dwellings in 2004/05. On this basis, the application of the 20% buffer to the shortfall appears to me to be unwarranted in the context of the local circumstances.

1.10 Notwithstanding my view that the buffer should not be applied to the shortfall, given the different approaches at both Inspector and Secretary of State level, I have undertaken the calculation of the five year housing land supply position on both bases (using the Sedgefield approach in both cases). This produces a position of 4.9 years when (as I favour) the 20% buffer is applied to the housing requirement only, and a position of 4.7 years when the buffer is applied to the housing requirement and the shortfall.

1.11 In conclusion, it is my opinion that Eastleigh Borough Council is not currently able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply position in accordance with the NPPF, although it is very close to being able to do so.