

MGCLG Planning Consultations

Changes to the current planning system

On the 6 August alongside the release of the Planning White Paper, the Government also released a consultation paper proposing four changes to the current planning system.

Responses to the consultation are required before 1 October 2020.

The four changes are proposed as shorter term measures in advance of the legislation that will follow the White Paper. They are as follows:

- Changes to the standard methodology for assessing local housing need. (The paper makes it clear that whilst this is a short-term measure it is also relevant to the proposals in the White Paper.)
- Securing first homes at a discount to market price for first time buyers including key workers, through developer contributions in the short term until transition into the new system
- Temporary lifting of the small site threshold below which developers do not need to contribute to affordable housing up to 40 or 50 units
- Extending the current Permission in Principle to major development to provide a fast route to secure the principle of development without the need to work up detailed plans first

Implications

Under the new standard housing methodology, Ryedale's housing requirement will rise to a need for 357 new dwellings per annum. This is a significant increase from the planned housing requirement of 200 dwellings per annum. It is a level of housebuilding that Ryedale has never experienced and will require significant additional land releases to sustain. Officers are currently calculating the housing land supply position. However, the ability of the Council to demonstrate a five year land supply against this level of housebuilding to the point at which a new plan is prepared will be very unlikely. The proposed change will mean that the Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development in the national policy will apply and the Council will have to consider the further release of land to support growth at this level.

It should be noted that since this consultation was first published (along with the White Paper: Planning for the Future) it has been reported in The Press that the Government is already reviewing the formula that is used to calculate the house building targets. At this stage however it is not clear when this will be clarified by Government and it is likely that their central objective of building more houses in areas with the worst affordability issues will remain.

The Council already looks to secure discount for sale market housing as it negotiates affordable housing contributions from sites. This proposed change is not, on the face of it, significantly different in principle to what we currently look to provide.

Changes to the threshold at which affordable housing contributions can be made on small sites would have implications for the ability to deliver affordable housing in villages and the rural area, without the release of further larger sites in these locations. This may prove a challenge in terms of the scale and character of these areas.

Next Steps

A response to the consultation needs to be submitted before 1 October 2020.