

I hope this article finds you well.

Please find below a few thoughts about council's 5 year land supply positions and those dreaded neighbourhood plans...or 'anti-development plans'...which so many seem to be. We're a cynical lot here at Richborough!

Firstly, I thought it would be useful to share links to a few websites which may not be essential references such as the NPPF or PPG but nevertheless worth having in your favourites if they're not in there already.

Here's a link to a quarterly statistical report by PINS which includes a wealth of information on the statistical performance of individual inspectors in terms of numbers of appeals being handled, % allowed % dismissed etc. It also provides the average time for each appeal route and contains a breakdown by LPA of appeals by type and decision. Finally it also provides useful tables of Local Plan examinations with submission dates and where relevant; outcomes.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/planning-inspectorate-statistics-for-201415>

Another planning reference from Landmark Chambers which references cases back to relevant paragraphs of the NPPF:

<http://www.landmarkchambers.co.uk/nppf6>

Some interesting Green Belt statistics and maps listed by region:

<http://www.undertheradar.com/2015/06/creating-and-english-green-belt-atlas.html?m=1>

List of called in decisions from PINs:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-applications-called-in-decisions-and-recovered-appeals>

An alternative resource to Magic for identifying PROWs – useful for a quick search:

<http://www.rowmaps.com/>

We've all see some interesting pre-election decisions involving listed buildings and heritage assets and here's a website that provides more detailed information than the likes of Magic and is a little quicker to deliver search results.

<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results.aspx>

A useful website for identifying residual capacity within UK schools. This information is only updated annually but is nevertheless a useful indicator.

<http://www.education.gov.uk/edubase/home.xhtml;jsessionid=896A77511CB52371AD097FB33F711B15>

Planning magazine's tracking of Local Plan progress – membership required.

<http://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1212815/maps-core-strategy-progress-data>

Shock news - councils are overestimating their five-year housing land supply

The research by Indigo Planning found that the average local authority in the South East has a 0.3 year lower supply than estimated. The research states that those councils struggling to reach their housing targets are *“increasingly reliant on sites that have no certainty of coming forward in the next five years”*. Research last month by Savills also found that 43% of councils that claim to have a five-year land supply do not in reality.

Councils can use one of two different methodologies to calculate their land supply figures, often leading to the production of different results between developers and councils. The Sedgefield method distributes any existing housing shortfall within the first five years of a local plan, whereas the Liverpool method spreads the shortfall over the whole period.

Indigo – which used the Sedgefield method in its research – also suggests that councils are too reliant on sites which might not be deliverable in five years, with as much as 80% of the land supply for some councils coming from sites which do not have planning permission.

In response to the new research, Housing Minister Brandon Lewis said that the Government *“has provided guidance and offered practical support to all local authorities to help them identify their local housing need.”*

A tricky state of affairs no matter how much guidance or support is given. Calculating a five-year land supply is clearly going to remain a matter of some contention.

Plan to fail - Neighbourhood Plans

The Rolleston on Dove case which the High Court has made an Order quashing the Secretary of State's decision and remitting it for redetermination was the first successful action of its kind...but what about the future of Neighbourhood Plans in general terms?

Re-appointed Housing Minister Brandon Lewis MP has shed a little more light on the likely nature of neighbourhood planning reforms announced in the Queen's Speech.

The Government briefing accompanying the Queen's Speech contained a single line stating that the Government would *“simplify and speed up the neighbourhood planning system, to support communities that seek to meet local housing and other development needs through neighbourhood planning”*.

Conservative MP for York Outer Julian Sturdy has since tabled a parliamentary question posing the query that has been on industry lips since the announcement – what does this actually mean?

Brandon Lewis' written response to Mr Sturdy's question has now been issued and reads:

“Over 1,500 communities, representing over 6 million people, have started the process of neighbourhood planning. The Government wants to support communities that actively seek to meet local housing and other development needs through neighbourhood planning, and our £22.5 million support programme for 2015-18 offers a range of financial and technical support and online resources to support neighbourhood planning. The Queen's Speech to Parliament also set out that the Housing Bill would include measures to speed up the neighbourhood planning process. We will be publishing more details in due course. These reforms will build on the reforms to speed up and simplify the process that took effect in February.”

And so, amidst the standard praise for departmental policy, there is a hint of what the Government has in mind for neighbourhood planning. The February reforms saw Locality, an umbrella group for a number of community organisations, awarded a contract to provide technical support for neighbourhood planning groups and to oversee the allocation of £22 million of neighbourhood plan grant funding. DCLG hopes that this support will give groups drawing up neighbourhood plans better access to the technical knowledge needed to produce a timely and approvable neighbourhood plan.

Brandon Lewis seems to suggest that the Government will be looking to further widen this access to technical knowledge, with the aim of ensuring that more neighbourhood plans better fulfil their technical function, as the community-controlled application of Local Plan policies. Could this help to address problems seen in some areas, where neighbourhood planning groups are bringing forward plans with a very different function in mind - the frustration of development?

We can expect concrete proposals on neighbourhood planning reforms to be contained in the Housing Bill. With legislating for the EU referendum taking up a fair chunk of the Government's House of Commons time it could be some months before the Bill is unveiled for parliamentary consideration.

Some interesting links to topical articles:

Chief planner signals 'no change' on policy framework:

<http://www.planningresource.co.uk/article/1352488/chief-planner-signals-no-change-policy-framework>

Politics

Communities Secretary Urges Whitehall To "Loosen Their Grip" On Land For House Building:

<http://www.allen-york.com/blog/2015/06/communities-secretary-urges-whitehall-to-loosen-their-grip-on-land-for-house-building>

House building

BlackRock triumphs in battle to build new town:

<http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/business/article1571517.ece>

1,000 new homes for private rent in London:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/1000-new-homes-for-private-rent-in-london>

Housing market grinds to a halt as sales hit lowest level since 1978

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/property/house-prices/11666634/Housing-market-grinds-to-a-halt-as-sales-hit-lowest-level-since-1978.html>

London house price boom: Average asking price soars to more than £600,000

<http://www.cityam.com/217910/no-end-sight-house-price-boom>

800,000 homes provided since 2009

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/britain-is-building-again>

Plans approved for 1,000-home East Sussex urban extension

<http://bit.ly/1dgc3U6>

Opinion

Low-cost London housing being stymied by government, says critic:

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/8f69f39e-1474-11e5-ad6e-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3dOoalufA>

Why the government's long-term economic plan should include building more social rented homes:

<http://bit.ly/1GHUFST>

How to meet Britain's housing needs:

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/jun/23/how-to-meet-britains-housing-needs>

Housing bill opportunity to 'refine' right-to-buy:

<http://www.lgcplus.com/news/housing-bill-opportunity-to-refine-right-to-buy/5087079.article>

Publications

RTPI research demonstrates link between regeneration and life prospects:

<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/briefing-room/news-releases/2015/june/rtpi-research-demonstrates-link-between-regeneration-and-life-prospects/>

7 experts contribute to RTPI publication on devolution:

<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/briefing-room/news-releases/2015/june/7-experts-contribute-to-rtpi-publication-on-devolved-governance/>

Beyond the election: what next for planning?

<http://pdf.euro.savills.co.uk/residential---other/spotlight-beyond-the-election.pdf>

Middle earners priced out of affordable home ownership

<http://www.london.gov.uk/media/assembly-press-releases/2015/06/middle-earners-priced-out-of-affordable-home-ownership>

Karl Parkinson