



Release of Land for Housing Development in Blackpool

'Plan, Monitor, Manage' Advice Note

October
2004

RELEASE OF LAND FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN BLACKPOOL

'PLAN, MONITOR, MANAGE' ADVICE NOTE

OCTOBER 2004*

**Blackpool Council
Planning and Transportation Division
PO Box 17
Corporation Street
Blackpool, FY1 1LZ
email: planning.transportation@blackpool.gov.uk**

*** Approved by Executive on 3rd November 2004, statistically updated to reflect housing supply situation as at 31/03/06 and the Adopted Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016 (June 2006)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This advice note sets out the Council's position with regard to the release of land and buildings for housing development. The advice is informed by the latest available housing monitoring data, which indicates that there is a need to restrict the number of planning permissions for new housing development in order to deliver new housing at a rate in line with Blackpool's annual housing requirement. More detailed information on the housing supply situation is contained in the Council's annual housing monitoring report. The need for a more restrictive approach arises from the number of dwellings for which planning permission has already been granted and the rate at which planning applications for housing on previously developed sites continue to be submitted to the Council.
- 1.2 This note aims to:
- set out the planning policy background to a restrictive approach;
 - explain the need for the introduction of a restrictive approach in the context of Blackpool's housing supply situation;
 - provide guidance on how the approach will be implemented by the Council through the determination of planning applications.

2. POLICY BACKGROUND

- National Planning Guidance
- 2.1 The main national planning guidance relating to housing is Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3). A crucial theme running through PPG3, and the various companion guides that have followed it, is that of 'plan, monitor and manage' (PMM). The aim of PMM is to have a flexible more responsive approach to meeting housing requirements which can take account of on-going actual housing activity and adjust the supply of land for development accordingly so there is no significant under or over-provision of new dwellings over a plan period.
- Regional Planning Guidance and Structure Plan Policy
- 2.2 Blackpool's annual housing requirement is determined through Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG 13) and the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (JLSP). The main thrust of RPG13, which was published on 31 March 2003, is that new housing development should be concentrated in the Greater Manchester and Merseyside conurbations and particularly their urban cores. This will mean a substantially reduced level of housebuilding in Lancashire each year during the period 2001-2016 compared to the previous decade.
- 2.3 The replacement Joint Lancashire Structure Plan for the period 2001-2016 was adopted in March 2005 having been independently tested at an Examination in Public (EiP) held in January 2004.

- 2.4 Policy 12 of the JLSP distributes Lancashire's annual average housing provision figure among the 14 districts in the county. Blackpool is required to provide an annual average of 175 dwellings in the period 2001-06 and 235 dwellings in the period 2006-16, a total of 3230 dwellings between 2001 and 2016. The Report of the EiP Panel accepted that this level of provision for Blackpool was appropriate.
- 2.5 RPG and the JLSP place great emphasis on the need for districts to use the 'PMM' approach to deliver new housing at a rate consistent with the annual housing requirement. The 'calculating new housing requirements' box in the reasoned justification to Policy 12 of the JLSP states *"the requirement for new housing approvals should consider the annual rate of provision within the particular phase of the Plan period. Districts should aim to meet the annual housing provision on a yearly basis as closely as possible"*
- 2.6 The EiP Panel supported the adoption of this approach. Their conclusion to the issues of the realism and effect of the JLSP approach to housing provision and phasing, including the use of moratoria on new permissions states (in Para. 6.48): *"It is essential to continue to take whatever steps are available to keep the numbers of new permissions under control in the short to medium term while existing commitments work their way through to completion. The use of specific policies and SPG by districts to regulate new permissions, while allowing for appropriate exceptions, appears to be the best and probably the only way forward in the circumstances."*

Blackpool Local Plan

- 2.7 The Blackpool Local Plan covers the period from 2001-2016 and was adopted on 9th June 2006.
- 2.8 Policy HN3 of the Local Plan, sets out the circumstances in which there would need to be a restrictive approach towards the approval of new housing development on previously-developed land, including conversions, in order to ensure that the annual housing requirement is not exceeded. The policy defines over-supply as the point at which outstanding planning permissions would deliver more than five years supply of housing, taking into account any under or over-supply of new housing earlier in the plan period. The five-year period reflects the time lag between planning permission being granted and completion of developments and need for a 'stock' of permissions to be available at any point in time to provide future housing completions. The need for a phasing policy is broadly accepted by housing developers, Government Office for the North West and the North West Regional Assembly and was upheld by the Inspector at the Local Plan Inquiry. The basis of the need to control the annualised rate of housing development is an established part of the delivery of the PMM approach.

3. THE HOUSING SUPPLY SITUATION IN BLACKPOOL

- 3.1 The present housing supply situation is set out below. Between 1st April 2001 and 31st March 2006, **1379** dwellings were completed in Blackpool. This exceeded the dwelling requirement for that period by **504**. Taking into account this oversupply, as of 31st March 2006, sufficient land and buildings with planning permission were available to provide the number of dwellings needed for at least the next seven years.

Housing Supply Situation as at 31st March 2006	No. of Dwellings
Completions (01/04/01 to 31/03/06)	1379
5 Year Housing Requirement 2001-06 (5 x 175)	875
Oversupply 2001-06	504
5 Year Housing Requirement 2006-11 (5 x 235)	1175
Oversupply 2001-06	504
Outstanding 5 Year Housing Requirement	671
Further Commitments (Dwellings with Planning Permission at 31/03/06)	1051
LESS Additional Dwellings that may be Required Off Site to Replace Cleared Dwellings	-22*
Potential Oversupply (Net of Replacement Dwellings)	402
PLUS Adopted Local Plan Allocations Without Planning Permission	60 [□]
Potential Oversupply	462

*Redevelopment site S/033 provides a net gain of 22 units, therefore this is added to the oversupply as an addition to the housing stock

[□] Assumed to be developed at 40 dwellings per hectare

4. THE NEED FOR RESTRICTIVE APPROACH TO THE RELEASE OF LAND AND BUILDINGS FOR NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 It is clear that there is too large a supply of potential housing at the present time, compared to the annual housing requirement set out in the JLSP. This number of outstanding planning permissions would trigger the restrictive approach adopted in Local Plan Policy HN3. The position of oversupply would be materially exacerbated by the approval of new housing development, which would be contrary to Policies UR7 and UR8 of RPG 13 and Policy 12 of the JLSP (see appendix).
- 4.2.1 Continuing to approve new housing development in an oversupply situation would undermine regional planning guidance, JLSP policy on housing provision,

and the control of housing development in accordance with policy HN1 of the Local Plan. This justifies strict controls over the timing of the release of further site and buildings for housing development in the determination of planning applications, other than where exceptional circumstances apply.

- 4.3 The need to introduce a more restrictive approach with immediate effect is paramount because the oversupply situation has, in the main, emerged since April 2003. In the financial year 2003-04, 708 additional dwellings were granted planning permission, all but 5 of these permissions involving development of previously-developed land or the conversion of existing buildings. The number of applications submitted for the development of windfall sites¹ was much higher than could be anticipated by looking at past trends and the number of approvals for the conversion of existing buildings was higher than for a number of years. Since April 2004, approvals for new housing development have continued at a rate that exceeds the annual housing requirement.
- 4.4 The phasing policy to manage the release of land for new housing development - policy HN3 was fully supported by the Local Plan inquiry inspector, and is now an adopted policy. Accordance with this policy, along with Local Plan policy HN1 and the wider strategic JLSP and RPG policies requires immediate implementation of a more restrictive approach on future applications for housing development.

5. IMPLEMENTING A RESTRICTIVE APPROACH

- 5.1 In determining planning applications for new housing development the Council will adopt the following approach:

Planning permission for new housing development will not be granted where it is likely to result in the annual housing requirement for Blackpool being materially exceeded, unless it is demonstrated that exceptional circumstances apply.

Exceptions

- 5.2 Additional housing provision can only be appropriate if there are very good planning reasons for justifying an exception to the overall control proposed in this advice note. Such reasons will be weighed in the balance when considering the materiality of any excess housing provision that would result. The JLSP seeks to set out a consistent approach on these matters across districts in the county. Paragraph 6.3.13 of the JLSP states: "*Where there is a significant oversupply of housing permissions, planning applications for further residential development may not be approved unless they make an essential contribution to the supply of affordable or special needs housing or form a key element within a mixed use regeneration project. Any such project should be compatible with, and help achieve, the regeneration objectives of the local authority. Districts may identify, through the Local Plan process or supplementary planning guidance, other circumstances where it may be appropriate to approve residential development in a situation of housing oversupply, such as the conservation benefits of maintaining an existing building worthy of retention.*"

- 5.3 The above advice will be considered in assessing whether a proposal should be granted planning permission as an exception to the restrictive approach. The regeneration benefits of a proposal will be a particularly important consideration given the specific role new housing development has to play in the regeneration of Blackpool and that the fact Blackpool is designated as a Regeneration Priority Area by Policy SD3 of RPG. In view of this the Council considers that housing development that will make a positive contribution to regeneration initiatives should not be refused planning permission on the basis of numerical oversupply. Such an assessment of regeneration benefits needs to consider both the existing use of the land or building, if any, and the design and form of the proposed development.
- 5.4 It is particularly important that development granted exceptionally provides the type of accommodation most needed to meet the needs of the community and which assists regeneration initiatives that are seeking to achieve a better balance in the mix of housing available in inner area neighbourhoods.
- 5.5 In order to ensure that a consistent and transparent approach is taken to assessing whether a new housing development should be granted planning permission as an exception to the overall approach, the following guidance is provided:
- (A) The following types of housing development will be considered as exceptions to the restrictive approach outlined in this advice note:
- i) Proposals that would not result in a net increase in the overall stock of dwellings.**
 - ii) Substitution of house types and density changes providing they are appropriate in terms of the provisions of PPG3 in seeking to make the best use of land and increase the range of house sizes and types provided when compared to the previously approved scheme.**
 - iii) Development of previously developed land (including conversions) that would make an essential contribution to the supply of affordable or specialist housing.**
 - iv) Development of dwellings for agricultural workers where need has been demonstrated by the applicant.**
 - v) Proposals on previously-developed land (including conversions) which have clear regeneration, community or conservation benefits; such as development that:**
 - supports the Council's regeneration initiatives in the Resort Core, town centre or priority neighbourhoods as defined by the Blackpool Local Plan 2001-2016;**
 - forms a key element of a mixed-use regeneration project;**

- has special townscape or conservation benefits;
- would reduce the over-supply of lower standard holiday accommodation in the Borough (for example premises without en-suite facilities in each room) and secure its replacement with high quality self-contained residential units with at least two bedrooms in each unit;
- brings long term derelict land or empty buildings into use to the benefit of the amenity of the surrounding area.

All proposals must otherwise accord with Local Plan policies.

(B) Except where the proposal specifically meets at least one of the criteria set out above under A, the following are given as examples of the types of housing development on previously-development land and buildings that are unlikely to be granted planning permission:

- i) Sub-division of single dwellings into two or more smaller units.**
- ii) Redevelopment of sites, or conversion of buildings, in existing use.**
- iii) Demolition of existing dwellings and redevelopment of the site at a higher density.**
- iv) Development of new dwellings within the curtilage of an existing dwelling.**

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list and each planning application will be determined on its own merits.

5.6 The advice set out in this document applies to all planning applications submitted to the Council on or after **11th October 2004**. An exception may be made for applications that were the subject of informal discussions between a developer and Council officers before this date and it was previously indicated that development of a site or conversion of an existing building for new housing was likely to be acceptable in principle.

6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

6.1 The approach to the release of land for housing development set out in this advice note will be reviewed on an annual basis taking into account the latest available annual housing monitoring information.

APPENDIX

Regional Planning Guidance for the North West, RPG 13 (March 2003)

Policy UR7 Regional Housing Provision

Local planning authorities should monitor and manage the availability of land identified in development plans to achieve the annual averages rates of housing provision set out in Table 5.1 and in doing so must seek to minimise the amount of land needed for new housing by:

- bringing about a reduction in vacancy rates to 3% in the existing dwelling stock, and 2% within the new stock, in line with Policy UR6, through the increased re-use of suitable vacant housing, especially in areas where vacancy rates are currently high, including East Lancashire and the North West Metropolitan Area;
- maximising the re-use of vacant and under-used land and buildings in line with Policy UR4;
- making allowances for the contribution that can be made by conversions to residential use and subdivision of existing dwellings;
- considering the impact of new housing development upon the existing housing stock and market in the immediate area and adjoining districts.

In considering the allocation of land for new housing in development plans, local planning authorities should:

- adopt the sequential approach to development location as outlined in the Core Development Principles and the Spatial Development Framework;
- use the results of up-to-date Urban Potential Studies to inform the allocation of specific sites;
- introduce phasing policies in line with Policy UR8 as part of the 'Plan, Monitor and Manage' approach;
- allow for clearance replacement to reflect local circumstances, as a mechanism for the recreation of viable and sustainable neighbourhoods; and
- take into account the need for affordable housing provision in line with Policy UR9.

Policy UR8 A Phasing Mechanism for Release of Housing Land

Land allocated for housing should be released in an orderly, managed, manner in accordance with the principles set in Policies DP1-4 and SD1-9. To this end, all development plans should incorporate phasing mechanisms which:

- are underpinned by housing capacity studies prepared in accordance with the guidance in PPG3 and in the Good Practice Guide, 'Tapping the Potential', carried out on a regular basis by local authorities in partnership with the house building industry and other parties;
- secure the development of previously-developed land and buildings in urban areas as a first priority;
- allow for the release of land for housing in phases over the period of the plan, the timing of release to take account of the need for co-ordinated provision of the necessary infrastructure and the overall availability of land for housing identified in the housing provision studies; and
- take account of the potential housing land provision and policy framework in place in adjoining local authority areas to ensure a sub-regionally consistent approach that does not undermine urban renaissance in other districts.

Draft Replacement Joint Lancashire Structure Plan Policy 12

Provision will be made for the following number of new dwellings for new households in the period 2001-2016.

	New Dwellings	Annual Average	Dwelling Provision
	2001-16	2001-6	2006-16
Blackpool	3230	175	235

Other additional dwellings may be required to replace those cleared in the plan period

Blackpool's Housing Requirement 2001-2016 (No. of dwellings)

	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Annual Requirement	175	175	175	175	175	235	235	235
Cumulative Requirement	175	350	525	700	875	1110	1345	1580

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Annual Requirement	235	235	235	235	235	235	240
Cumulative Requirement	1815	2050	2285	2520	2755	2990	3230

Local Plan Policy HN3

Housing sites, including windfall sites and conversions, will be released in a manner that gives priority to the development of previously developed land and helps to deliver new housing at a rate in line with the annual housing requirement.

Where annual monitoring indicates that there is a need for planning permissions for new housing to be restricted to ensure that the housing requirement for the following five year period is not exceeded, planning permission will only be granted for the development of previously developed land, including the conversion of existing buildings, that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- supports regeneration initiatives, particularly within identified priority areas;
- has special townscape or conservation benefits;
- brings derelict or contaminated land, or long term empty or neglected buildings into beneficial use;
- meets a specifically identified local need such as affordable or specialist housing;
- forms a key element of a mixed use regeneration project;
- would convert houses in multiple occupation or reduce the over-supply of lower standard holiday accommodation, securing their replacement with high quality residential units.



The Council believes in access for all.

To ensure services provided by Blackpool Council are accessible, information is available upon request in a variety of accessible formats, including large print, Braille, on audio-cassette or computer disc.

We can also provide help for British Sign Language users and provide information in languages other than English.

Please ask for details.

Customer First Centre: Telephone – 01253 477 477