

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

19 May 2020

Question from Anne Henshaw - Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE Wiltshire)

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation

To Councillor Toby Sturgis – Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Investment

Review of the Local Plan

Question 1

Is it correct that under the current review of the adopted Local Plan, and therefore under current national planning policy, the Council's housing land supply is being measured against a higher figure derived from the Government's Standard Methodology?

Response

Cabinet on 30 April 2019 “*Endorsed a housing range of between 40,840 and 45,600 homes as the basis to test and inform an appropriate local housing requirement for Wiltshire over the period 2016 to 2036.*”

The lower number in the range is set by the standard method produced by the Government (referred to as 'local housing need'). The higher number is based on analysis that suggests that to support projected job growth, additional housing is needed to increase the level of resident workers and avoid net in-commuting. Appendix 2 of the cabinet papers provides more detail on how the figures in the range were calculated.

These numbers are being used to inform plan making.

The Government's standard methodology relies on inputs from data sources that are periodically updated. As such, the current local housing need for Wiltshire is 2,024 per annum or 40,480 over the plan period.

Regarding how the Council measures 5-year housing land supply it is correct that Government policy (National Planning Policy Framework) now requires us to measure this against the local housing need figure derived from the Government's

standard method. However, this is lower and not higher than the equivalent figure in the Wiltshire Core Strategy of 2,100 per annum.

As the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015) is now 5 years old, the housing requirement used in the 5-year housing land supply calculation is Wiltshire's Local Housing Need, based on the Government's standard method¹.

Question 2

How will the Council take into account the 'Exceptional Circumstances' which warrant a departure from the Standard Method?

The Exceptional Circumstances are the Covid -19 pandemic and the consequent effects for the economy, housing market, house sales and build rates over the next years. The government has indicated that the standard methodology itself is under review.

Response

See response to Question 1.

In developing the review of the Local Plan, the Council will need to take into account the implications of any changes to the standard methodology when they are published by Government. It is too early to say what effect Covid-19 pandemic may have on planning for housing growth.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments>