

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	26 April 2017
Subject:	'Fixing our Broken Housing Market' Housing White Paper Consultation
Report of:	Annette Roberts, Head of Development Services
Corporate Lead:	Robert Weaver, Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor D M M Davies
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

In February 2017 the Government published its Housing White Paper: 'Fixing our broken housing market'. The White Paper sets out how the Government intends to boost housing supply and, over the long term, create a more efficient housing market. The paper presents a series of proposals based around four key steps:

Step 1: Planning for the right homes in the right places

Step 2: Building homes faster

Step 3: Diversifying the market

Step 4: Helping people now

As part of the White Paper the Government are consulting on changes that will result to planning policy and legislation. The deadline for responding to this consultation is 2nd May 2017. The , consultation covers proposals set out in Step 1 and Steps 2 only. In order to guide the consultation feedback a series of questions around the proposals has been set out as an appendix to the Paper.

It is considered that a joint response from the Joint Core Strategy authorities is appropriate to ensure that our feedback to proposals is given as much weight as possible. Appendix 1 to this report presents the proposed consultation response.

Recommendation:

To AGREE the proposed response to the White Paper set out at Appendix 1 for submission to the government consultation on behalf of Tewkesbury Borough Council, and to form part of a joint response of the JCS authorities.

Reasons for Recommendation:

The White Paper sets out proposals that would have impact on delivery of housing and local and neighbourhood planning in Tewkesbury Borough. It is therefore important that a response to these proposals is made.

Resource Implications:

No direct impacts at this stage, but proposals in the White Paper could lead to further changes in

legislation which put additional requirements on the Council and have resource implications, particularly in regard to officer time.
Legal Implications: No direct impacts at this stage, but proposals in the White Paper could lead to further changes in legislation and regulation.
Risk Management Implications: None although it is important to ensure that this is kept under review as legislation emerges.
Performance Management Follow-up: Changes to legislation as a result of the White Paper will be reviewed through the development plan making and development management process.
Environmental Implications: None.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 The Government's Housing White Paper: 'Fixing our broken housing market' was published on 7 February 2017. It presents the Government's latest strategy for getting more homes built and works towards the pledge to build 1 million homes by 2020, improve access to the housing market for all and make homes more affordable.

The paper is split into four 'steps' under which a number of proposals for improving housing delivery are made:

- Step 1: Planning for the right homes in the right places
- Step 2: Building homes faster
- Step 3: Diversifying the market
- Step 4: Helping people now

1.2 As part of the White Paper the Government are consulting on changes that will result to planning policy and legislation. The deadline for responding to this consultation is 2 May 2017. The consultation covers proposals set out in Step 1 and Step 2 only. In order to guide the consultation feedback a series of questions around the proposals has been set out as an Appendix to the paper.

2.0 HOUSING WHITE PAPER SUMMARY

2.1 A brief summary of the key proposals set out under each step is provided below.

2.2 STEP 1: Planning for the right homes in the right places

Government has stated that it will:

Getting plans in place

- Intervene, when necessary, to ensure that local plans are put in place so that communities in the areas affected are not disadvantaged by unplanned growth.
- Set out in regulations a requirement for plans to be reviewed at least once every five years.
- Consider changes to the NPPF to expect authorities to prepare Statements of Common Ground to address meeting housing requirements across authority boundaries.

Making plans easier to produce

- Consult on options for introducing a standardised approach to assessing housing requirements.
- Propose that by April 2018 the new methodology for calculating the OAN would apply as the baseline for assessing the five year supply.
- Expect authorities to have clear policies for addressing requirements for groups with particular needs, i.e. elderly and disabled people.

Making enough land available in the right places

- Require Local plans to accommodate their identified housing requirements unless there are policies in the NPPF that provide strong reasons for restricting development, or where the adverse impacts of meeting the requirement would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- Amend the NPPF to attach great weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes.
- Ensure all authorities can dispose of land with the benefit of planning permission which they have granted to themselves.

Supporting small and medium sized sites and thriving rural communities

- Expect local planning authorities to have policies that support the development of small windfall sites.
- Expect great weight should be given to using small undeveloped sites within settlements for homes.
- Ensure there is a clear presumption that residential development opportunities on small sites should be treated positively.
- Expect authorities to identify opportunities for villages to thrive, especially where it would support services and meet local housing needs.

Green Belt Land

- Amend national policy to make clear that Green Belt boundaries should only be amended when it can be demonstrated that all other reasonable options have been examined fully.
- Where land is removed from the Green belt, local policies should require impact to be offset by compensatory improvements to environmental quality or accessibility to the remaining the Green Belt.

Using land more efficiently for development

- Make efficient use of land and avoid building homes at low densities where there is a shortage of land for meeting needs.
- Ensure the density and form of development reflects the character, accessibility and infrastructure capacity of an area.
- Review the Nationally Described Space Standard to ensure greater local housing choice.

2.3 STEP 2: Building homes faster

Government has stated that it will:

Providing greater certainty

- Amend the NPPF to give local authorities the opportunity to have their housing land supply agreed on an annual basis, and fixed for a one year period.
- Not deem NDPs out of date where they plan for housing delivery unless there is a significant lack of land supply for housing in the wider local authority area.

Boosting local authority capacity to delivery

- Increase nationally set planning fees – enabling authorities to increase fees by 20% from June 2017.
- Allow a further 20% increase for authorities who are delivering the homes their communities need.

Tackling unnecessary delays caused by planning conditions

- Tackle unnecessary delays caused by planning conditions – allowing the Secretary or State to prohibit conditions that do not meet the national policy tests and ensure pre-commencement conditions can only be used with the agreement of the applicant.

Simplifying developer contributions

- Examination options for reforming the system of developer contributions and will respond to the independent review of the CIL that has been published alongside the White Paper. An announcement will be made at the Autumn Budget 2017.

Sharpening local authority tools to speed up the building of homes

- Amend national policy to encourage local authorities to consider how realistic it is that a site will be developed when deciding whether to grant planning permission for housing on sites which haven't previously been implemented.
- Consider whether an applicant's track record of delivery should be taken into account when determining applications for housing.
- Consider amending national policy to encourage local authorities to shorten the timescales for developers to implement a permission from three to two years.
- Prepare new guidance to encourage the use of compulsory purchase powers to support the build out of stalled sites.

Housing delivery test

- Introduce a new test to ensure local authorities are held accountable for their role in delivery new homes.
- From November 2017, if delivery falls below 95% of the annual requirement the authority should publish an action plan. If it falls below 85% then a 20% buffer would be added to the five year land supply requirement.

- From November 2018, if delivery falls below 25% then the presumption in favour of sustainable development would automatically apply. From November 2019 this would rise to 45% and from November 2020 to 65%.

2.4 STEP 3: Diversifying the market (Not subject to this consultation)

Government has stated that it will:

Small and medium sized builders

- Back small and medium sized builders to grow including through the Home Building Fund.
- Bring in new contractors through the Accelerated Construction programme.

Expand the contribution from other parts of the housing market

- Change the NPPF so that authorities know to plan proactively for Build to Rent where there is a need and make it easier for Build to Rent developers to offer affordable private rental homes instead of other types of affordable housing.
- Urge housing associations to explore every avenue for building more homes and make every effort to improve efficiency in order to release for more resources for house building.
- Support local authorities in building more homes.

2.5 STEP 4: Helping people now (Not subject to this consultation)

Government has stated that it will:

Helping people afford a home

- Introduce a Lifetime ISA – giving a 25% bonus on up to £4000 savings a year towards purchase of a new home.
- Commit £8.6bn to the Help to Buy equity local scheme to 2021.

Starter Homes

- Make clear that starter homes should be available to households with an income of less than £80,000.
- Remove plans for a mandatory requirement of 20% starter homes on all development – they should be delivered according to local needs.
- Introduce a clear policy expectation that sites deliver a 10% affordable home ownership units.
- Clarify that starter homes can be acceptable on rural exceptions sites.

A fairer deal for renters and leaseholders

- Consult on legislation to ban letting agent fees to tenants.
- Introduce banning orders to remove the worst landlords or agents and enable local councils to issue fines and prosecute.

Making best use of existing homes

- Support local authorities to encourage efficient use of existing stock, making use of homes that are long-term empty.
- Support communities in taking the lead in developing homes, particularly in areas affected by second homes.

2.6 Although the White Paper is consulting on many proposals across Steps 1 and 2, there is nothing presented which would fundamentally change the approach that has been taken through the emerging Joint Core Strategy, Tewkesbury Borough Plan or Neighbourhood Development Plans. However, the proposals could lead to further legislation being introduced which put additional requirements on local authorities in plan making.

3.0 RESPONSE TO THE HOUSING WHITE PAPER

3.1 Appendix 1 to the report presentations a response to the consultation questions posed as part of the White Paper consultation. This has been prepared as combined Joint Core Strategy response in order to increase the weight and prominence of the position that is being taken regarding the Government's proposals.

4.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

4.1 Emerging Joint Core Strategy.
Housing Strategy 2017-2021.
Council Plan 2016-2020.

5.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

5.1 National Planning Policy Framework.
National Planning Practice Guidance.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

6.1 No direct impacts at this stage, but proposals in the White Paper could lead to further changes in legislation which put additional requirements on the Council and have resource implications, particularly in regard to officer time.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

7.1 No direct impacts at this stage, but proposals in the White Paper could lead to further changes in legislation which have an impact on sustainability.

8.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

8.1 None.

9.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

9.1 None.

Background Papers: The Housing White Paper – 'Fixing our broken housing market' (Feb 2017)

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Appendices: Appendix 1 – Joint Core Strategy Authorities Response to the Housing White Paper.