

14. ANNUAL HOUSING REPORT AND CASES CONTRARY TO THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (IF/DA)

1. Purpose of the report

The report provides a summary of 2 aspects of planning policy monitoring. The first document (Appendix 1) is a report focussing on housing data arising from planning decisions determined in accordance with the adopted Core Strategy. The second (Appendix 2) details a set of cases which have been determined as being contrary to the development plan along with other decisions, which have raised important issues for policy review. Monitoring of this data will enable the Authority to make choices on future housing and wider policies in an objective way.

Key Issues

- The rate of housing delivery since the plan base date (2006) means it is highly likely we will meet the overall predicted figures for housing delivery by 2026 (the end date for the plan)
- The broad geographical spread of housing by Spatial Landscape Area is in line with plan objectives. All new build affordable houses are delivered inside [policy] DS1 settlements. Further work on landscape monitoring will be required to highlight the degree to which development is conserving the overall character of settlements and the scope for further capacity. Data does however reveal a high percentage of delivery via change of use and conversion, which supports the conservation and enhancement objectives.
- Affordable local need housing comprises 22% of all housing delivered across the Park but in some areas this only addresses around half of the estimated requirement in the Core Strategy. For example in the White Peak and Derwent Valley it comprises about 30% of total delivery when the plan objective was 60% of all houses.
- Market dwellings are outstripping additional affordable dwellings by a ratio of 1.7 to 1. Dwellings with sole holiday use outstrip affordable dwellings by 1.2 to 1.
- Over 300 permitted homes are either not started or remain unfinished. At current rates, this represents 5 years' worth of houses waiting to be completed. At least 40 of these are new build affordable dwellings.
- Population modelling shows that at the current rate of delivery the population of the Park will remain stable in this and future plan periods. However, it will become increasingly top heavy in the older age groups, with implications for service providers operating at both ends of the age spectrum (e.g. education and care providers)
- Only a significant uplift in housing delivery will grow the population, but it is unclear whether such uplift would result in more people in the younger age groups. (Most of that uplift would probably be unrestricted high price market houses unless government grants for affordable housing increase significantly and we can secure more exception sites for them)
- A number of cases have been identified as contrary to the development plan (see Appendix 2) These do not represent a significant number in the context of the numbers of cases determined overall

2. Recommendations

1. The reports are adopted as an accurate record of housing delivery and policy monitoring in the National Park in 2018/19 and over the full plan period from 2006 – 2019
2. The report is adopted as part of the evidence base for Local Plan review purposes

How does this contribute to our policies and legal obligations?

3. The Authority has no legal obligation to produce an Annual Monitoring report but monitors performance of policies in key areas of planning such as housing delivery. Evidence will inform the drafting of issues and options for future planning policy in 2020/21

Background Information

4. The Authority's housing policies haven't changed significantly since the Structure Plan 1994 and Local Plan 2001. The focus is on addressing the most acute housing need of people in our communities in perpetuity, and ensuring that any general market housing drives the conservation and enhancement of the National Park. We achieve this through a strong strategic policy stance of constraint, which allows careful release of small sites to housing associations (HA's) and occasionally individuals. HA's build houses and manage them in perpetuity for the benefit of generations of local people. We also permit housing for rural businesses where they have an essential need for a worker to be on hand. These are for agricultural workers and other land managers, reflecting the type of farming that predominates in this area and the importance of this to retaining valued character in the landscape. These are also protected in perpetuity for future workers. We also permit significant numbers of market dwellings mainly by conversion of buildings that we consider to be of cultural heritage value to the National Park, but also via the enhancement of brownfield sites.
5. The Authority does not allocate land for housing and it does not maintain a five year supply of deliverable sites. When new development occurs, it is on exception sites. The term 'exception sites' means that within the general strategy of constraint, as an exception we may grant permission to address a particular issue (in this case the need for affordable housing to meet the needs of the many people who cannot to address their housing need by buying or renting from the market). We do this by careful identification and release of sites so that the valued National Park built environment is conserved and enhanced. This long-standing position is now supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (and related guidance) and the National Park Vision and Circular. The Authority has no housing target. However our Core Strategy divides and considers the impact of development against the three nationally recognised character areas (Dark Peak and Moorland Fringes, White Peak and Derwent Valley and South West Peak) and gives indicative figures for housing for each area that we anticipate will be delivered by the end of the Core Strategy period 2026.
6. The attached report (APPENDIX 1) indicates that, based on performance so far, it is likely we will exceed the overall anticipated numbers by 2026, but fall short in delivering the estimated number of affordable homes. Delivery in the National Park is reported back to MHCLG and our constituent councils. Our figures contribute towards their targets for housing delivery. This means our contribution to addressing housing issues is recognised by both the constituent councils and by Government.
7. APPENDIX 2 provides a separate analysis of decisions made contrary to policy across the development plan. The main message is that these represent a very small number

of cases and not all of them relate to housing. In most cases when members make decisions contrary to the officer recommendations it is a judgement call on matters of design and impact. These are difficult issues to determine and there are no definitive right and wrong decisions. However, the cases highlighted in Appendix 2 represent those where we consider the decision and the outcome of that decision is fundamentally contrary to our adopted policy, and therefore has an adverse impact upon our statutory purposes.

8. For housing cases specifically, the following represent some of the most challenging issues:
 - firstly determining whether, in the absence of a development boundary, a proposal is inside or on the edge of a [policy] DS1 settlement. This requires a high degree of specialist judgement but this can be challenged by local knowledge or perception of the place;
 - secondly, the ability to form a clear understanding of development viability can raise issues in terms of the degree of planning benefit (such as contributions to affordable housing, or aspects of design and sustainability) that may be achieved as part of a scheme;
 - thirdly, some cases raise difficulties in assessing the need for new housing, particularly where the schemes are for individuals or farm businesses. Where we do not receive robust evidence of need this can lead to the refusal of planning permission; and
 - fourthly, issues have emerged in having a clear and consistent approach to the determination of heritage significance in older buildings. This can make it difficult to decide whether a proposed development for housing use is justified, although recently adopted policies, new validation procedures and emerging guidance are beginning to improve these issues.
9. Since the Core Strategy base date of 2006 our policies have resulted in 1000 additional dwellings in the National Park. Around 750 of these are permanently lived in and 216 of these address local need. Another 250 are holiday lets. They positively enable people to visit and enjoy the National Park, which meets our second purpose to promote enjoyment of the National Park. They also help the local economy by enabling people to spend more time and money in the area. However they are perceived by some to negatively impact on the mix of housing stock and the amount that remains available to communities as permanent residences. It should be noted that unencumbered market houses can operate as holiday lets without the benefit of planning permission so the perception or reality of the extent of this use in small communities is only controllable to a limited extent by this Authority.
10. The Authority has good links with our colleagues in other National Parks. Our current and future policies are a result of sharing good practice and experience whilst recognising the differences between us in terms of landscape, population, types of settlement, and proximity to surrounding urban areas. We also have good links with our constituent councils, particularly Derbyshire Dales, and benefit hugely from their commitment (corporate and financial) towards addressing the housing needs of our communities. We are abreast of other developments in the housing sector, for example the growing support for community led housing and the popularity in some areas for Community Land Trusts. We have a good network of support available to us but we are constantly exploring how this might be improved. In the past few months we have had meetings with East Midlands Community Led Housing staff and local people with direct experience of Community Land Trusts. As a result we have been asked to run an event

in 2020 to promote community led housing to our communities.

11. Reference is also made to population modelling work which furthers our monitoring towards the impact of housing development on the sustainability of the population. This enables us to see our performance on housing in the context of demographic changes. It tells us how different levels of delivery can impact on the size and make-up of the National Park population. In terms of ensuring future planning policy contributes positively towards the goal of thriving communities it is important for us to understand the potential and limitations of any policy choices we might suggest as we move into plan review.

Proposals

12. Members note the findings of the reports and agree these as part of the evidence base for future plan making.

Are there any corporate implications members should be concerned about?

Financial:

13. None

Risk Management:

14. None

Sustainability:

15. None

Equality:

16. None

17. Background papers (not previously published)

None

18. Appendices

APPENDIX 1 - Peak District National Park Annual Housing and Development Report 2018/19

APPENDIX 2 - Cases approved contrary to the Development Plan

Report Author, Job Title and Publication Date

Ian Fullilove, Policy Planner, 04 December 2019
ian.Fullilove@peakdistrict.gov.uk