



King's Lynn and West Norfolk Site Allocations and Development Management Policies

Issue 2: The Development Management Policies (DM.1 to DM.22)
Tuesday 7 July 2015 at 14.00. Albanwise Ltd (ref: 819)

Question 2.2 Is the Council's approach towards the definition of settlement boundaries justified and consistent (policy DM 2)? How has the Council taken into account the boundary of schools and their playing fields?

- 1.1 In our submissions to the Preferred Options Site Allocations Document, we raised concerns that the proposed development boundaries of towns such as Downham Market are based on the 1998 Local Plan and do not currently include the proposed housing or employment allocations. We therefore welcome the inclusion of additional wording to Policy DM2 which states that whilst the areas outside of the boundaries will be treated as countryside, exceptions are to be made in the case of allocated sites. Whilst we support this amendment to the wording which makes it clear that allocated sites can be delivered even if outside the settlement boundary, we feel that further changes are required to ensure the policy is effective.
- 1.2 Whilst we generally support the Plan as a whole, we have a few areas of concern regarding the Council's housing policies and supply outlined in Section D: the Plan Period will not cover a full 15 years from the date of adoption; the Plan will not meet full objectively assessed needs¹; and the Council's housing supply is not robust. With regard to concerns regarding the robustness of the Council's identified housing supply and some existing commitments included with the Housing Trajectory², for instance the majority of larger sites within King's Lynn (1699 homes on allocated sites) are constrained by flood risk. This constraint may slow the delivery of land in King's Lynn meaning there could be a shortfall, particularly later in the Plan Period. A number of sites included within the Council's five year supply are either constrained by flood risk (655), comprise extant planning permissions which have been extended and have no guarantee of coming forward soon (122), or are allocated in the Local Plan (adopted 1998) and with no planning permission (142). Many of these concerns about the Borough Council's existing supply were expressed in a recent appeal for 40 homes in Clenchwarton (appeal reference APP/V2635/A/14/2219315). At Paragraph 13 the inspector concludes that the Council has no five year supply of housing land.
- 1.3 The current settlement boundaries would prevent the Council from making further allocations to meet its substantial housing need over the full Plan Period or responding to fluctuations in supply if other sites fail to deliver as anticipated due to a number of constraints identified above. There would be no way of bringing additional land forward to respond to housing needs without being in conflict with the settlement boundaries. The approach would not accord with the emphasis of NPPF to provide a positive strategy and boost significantly the supply of housing. A reliance on old settlement boundaries without a mechanism to enable the Council to bring forward further development to boost supply could subsequently stymie development.

¹ NMSS (May 2015) Assessing King's Lynn and West Norfolk's Housing Requirement: this identifies the Council's objectively assessed need to be around 710 dwelling per annum, compared to the proposed growth rate of 660.

² King's Lynn and West Norfolk Housing Trajectory (2014).



- 1.4 It is therefore recommended to meet the tests of soundness set out in NPPF (particularly ‘effective’) and to make the policy more positive, we feel that additional wording should be added to Policy DM2 to ensure that a trigger mechanism exists to give flexibility for further development to come forward to assist in boosting supply. For example this trigger may come into force if annual monitoring identifies the supply of housing will fall below the planned target rate of delivery.
- 1.5 Therefore, to ensure that the Plan is found sound, the amendments to policy DM2 should go even further than those already identified by the Council. The focus of additional growth should be on the strategic locations identified in the Submission Plan such as site F1.3. Such locations have already been assessed through the Council’s sustainability appraisal and site F1.3 has been assessed as being suitable for longer term growth (document reference SADMP01, paragraph F.1.24). More positive wording should be added to policy DM2 or F1.3 which makes it clear that additional land at North East Downham Market where there is additional available land free of constraints which can deliver more housing, will be brought forward, thereby providing a more effective Local Plan in line with NPPF (see also our response to issue 9). The Council has already acknowledged this is a sustainable location for growth. Further allocations on the site (in addition to policy F1.3 which identifies the site as being suitable for 250 homes) would be consistent with the Adopted King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Core Strategy (document reference GD01): the site is within the Area of Search for new housing development as identified on the Key Diagram for Downham Market.
- 1.6 Increasing the number of allocations in Downham Market would also be consistent with the call to significantly boost housing delivery as required by paragraph 47 of NPPF. This approach would prevent unwanted applications in unsustainable locations. As the second largest settlement in the Borough with available land free of significant constraints, Downham Market has the greatest potential to tackle any housing shortfall. This would also enable the Council to meet housing needs throughout the full Plan Period in a responsive and efficient manner to effectively maintain a supply of housing. This will provide a more effective planning policy basis in line with the principles of NPPF rather than relying on settlement boundaries which are over a decade old. Without such a mechanism the current approach could lead to unnecessary delays in bringing additional sites forward where required.

Summary and suggested changes to Policy DM2:

- 1.7 Whilst Albanwise does not necessarily consider policy DM2 to be unsound, as recently amended by the Council, wording should be added to the policy to provide greater flexibility and ensure the soundness of the Plan. Should the Council’s housing supply not deliver as anticipated due to the constrained supply, a reliance on the existing settlement boundaries, save for amendments to account for sites allocated in this Plan, would restrict the Council’s ability to deliver additional development bring forward additional sites to assist in boosting supply.
- 1.8 It is considered in order to meet the tests of soundness set out in NPPF particularly ‘effective’, the Council should consider alternative sustainable locations where additional development could be brought forward to assist in boosting supply and provide flexibility in the settlement boundaries to facilitate this such as Downham Market. This can be achieved through an additional paragraph to Policy DM2 and additional wording to paragraph F.1.24 as detailed below. The Inspector may also wish to consider additional wording to the text of policies DM2 and F1.3. The allocated area of site F1.3 follows an arbitrary line and could easily be extended to the north and east on land within the control of Albanwise should additional development land be required.



Precise Changes sought

Suggested additional paragraph to Policy DM2:

C.2.6 To ensure the plan is kept up to date, further development on land outside the settlement boundaries can be brought forward if annual monitoring shows that the required rate of delivery is not being achieved.

Suggested additional wording to paragraph F.1.24:

F.1.24 There appear no fundamental constraints to development, and there is the potential for future expansion to the east and south beyond at some point in the future (subject to future development plans). In the long term this could potentially help link to future employment and leisure development at Bexwell to the east. As the preferred direction for growth, further development on site F1.3 will be permitted if annual monitoring shows that the delivery of housing will fall below the required levels.

WORD COUNT: 1,327