



Summary Proof of Evidence of Ben Pycroft BA (Hons), Dip TP, MRTPI in relation to housing land supply

Residential development of up to 110 no. dwellings at
land at Henthorn Road, Clitheroe, BB7 2PL

for Gladman Developments Limited

Emery Planning project number: 19-069

PINS ref: APP/T2350/W/19/3221189

LPA ref: 3/2018/0688

Project : 19-069
Site address : Land at Henthorn Road,
Clitheroe, BB7 2PL
Client : Gladman Developments
Limited

Date : 08 April 2019
Author : Ben Pycroft

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This summary and my main proof of evidence are submitted on behalf of Gladman Developments Limited (i.e. the Appellant) in support of its appeal against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council to refuse to grant outline planning permission for the erection of up to 110 no. dwellings at land at Henthorn Road, Clitheroe (LPA ref: 3/2018/0688).
- 1.2 This summary and my main proof of evidence specifically address matters relating to housing land supply. They should be read alongside the proof of evidence prepared by Mr Lewis, which deals with all other planning matters.

Qualifications

- 1.3 I am Benjamin Michael Pycroft. I have a B.A. (Hons) and postgraduate diploma in Town Planning from the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. I have been a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute since October 2006. I am an Associate Director of Emery Planning, based in Macclesfield, Cheshire.
- 1.4 I have extensive experience in dealing with housing land supply matters and have prepared and presented evidence relating to five year housing land supply calculations at a number of Local Plan examinations and public inquiries.
- 1.5 The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this appeal (reference APP/T2350/W/19/3221189) is true and has been prepared and given in accordance with the guidance of my professional institution and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinion, and are provided irrespective of by whom I am instructed.
- 1.6 I provide this summary, my main proof of evidence and set of appendices. I also refer to the Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) on housing land supply.

Proposition

- 1.7 To address the case on behalf of the Appellant, this proof of evidence sets out the proposition that the Council cannot demonstrate a robust five year housing land supply against its housing requirement as required by paragraph 73 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The implication of this and all other planning matters are dealt with by Mr Lewis.

2. Assessment of the Council's housing supply

2.1 My assessment of the Council's five year housing land supply is based on six key stages:

1. Agreeing the base date and five year period;
2. Identifying the housing requirement;
3. Identifying the accumulated backlog;
4. Identifying the method of addressing the backlog;
5. Applying the appropriate buffer; and
6. Identifying a Realistic and Deliverable Supply.

2.2 Each stage is addressed below.

Stage 1: Agreeing the base date and five year period

2.3 The base date is the start date for the five year period for which both the requirement and supply should relate.

2.4 The Council's latest HLAS has a base date of 30th September 2018. The five year period is therefore 1st October 2018 to 30th September 2023.

2.5 The Council should not publish the HLAS and then retrospectively seek to provide evidence to support its position in the weeks and months after the document was published. I note that through agreeing the Statement of Common Ground on Housing Land Supply, the Council intends to rely on up to date evidence to 31st March 2019 (i.e. evidence produced over four months after the HLAS was published) to support its assumptions made on the disputed sites. This approach is inappropriate for the reasons I set out below.

2.6 The matter was discussed in the Woolpit appeal decision. Paragraph 70 of the appeal decision states:

"Furthermore, the Council has had to provide additional information to demonstrate that sites are deliverable as and when it has surfaced throughout the weeks and months following the publication of the AMR in an attempt at retrospective justification. It is wholly inadequate to have a land supply based upon assertion and then seek to justify the guesswork after the AMR has been published. The site at Union Road, Onehouse is one amongst others, which was only an allocation at the time the AMR was published. Although planning permission was granted 17 August 2018 it does not alter the fact that the site was only subject to an allocation at the cut-off date but the Council did not have any clear evidence that it would provide housing within 5 years."

- 2.7 The Council had the opportunity to re-set the base date and produce a revised HLAS for the appeal, however the Inspector will be aware from the conference call with the main parties and the Inspectorate which took place on Monday 18th March 2019 that when it was asked, the Council confirmed that it would not be producing a new HLAS and that the relevant base date is 30th September 2018. Any attempt by the Council to introduce new evidence produced after the HLAS was in November 2018 to retrospectively justify the position on the sites included within it would therefore be inappropriate.
- 2.8 Similarly, the Council should not attempt to include any new sites, which are not already included within the HLAS. This would effectively mean changing the base date, which has been agreed. Within this context, there have been a number of appeal decisions, which have found such an approach to be inappropriate.

Stage 2: Identifying the housing requirement

- 2.9 Paragraph 73 of the NPPF confirms that local planning authorities should identify and update a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old.
- 2.10 The housing requirement set out in the Core Strategy is 5,600 dwellings for the period 2008 to 2028 (i.e. 280 dwellings per annum). The Core Strategy was adopted in December 2014 and is therefore (just) less than five years old. It is agreed that this figure should be used to assess the Council's five year housing land supply against.

Stage 3: Identifying the accumulated backlog

- 2.11 Against the Local Plan Core Strategy requirement of 280 dwellings p.a., it is agreed that the backlog is 578 dwellings. This equates to over 2 years of unmet need (i.e. $578 / 280 = 2.06$).

Stage 4: Identifying the method of addressing the backlog

- 2.12 It is agreed that the backlog should be addressed in full over the five year period. This is known as the 'Sedgefield' method.

Stage 5: Applying the appropriate buffer

2.13 Whilst there has been a persistent under delivery of housing in Ribble Valley, because the Housing Delivery Test has been passed, the buffer is 5%.

Stage 6: Identifying a Realistic and Deliverable Supply

2.14 A summary of the deductions I have made are included within the following table:

Table A – Deductions made to the Council's five year supply

Site ref:	Address	Developer	No. of dwellings in the five year period		
			Council	Appellant	Difference
01	Higher Standen	Taylor Wimpey	308	150	-158
02	Chipping Lane	Barratt	246	140	-106
03	Barrowlands Parcel B	TW / DWH	180	130	-50
04	Waddington Road	Barratt / DWH	180	130	-50
05	Henthorn Road	-	24	0	-24
06	Worthalls Farm	-	15	0	-15
	Small sites windfall allowance	-	78	0	-78
	Small sites with planning permission	-	300	130	-170
	Total				-651

2.15 In summary, I consider the Council's five year supply equates to **1,892 dwellings** (i.e. 2,543 – 651).

3. Five year housing land supply at 30th September 2018

- 3.1 In conclusion, based on a housing requirement of 280 dwellings per annum and a backlog of 578 dwellings to be addressed in full in the five year period (i.e. Sedgefield method), the total five year requirement equates to 1,978 dwellings (i.e. 1,400 + 578). In addition, a 5% buffer applies, which means that the supply to be demonstrated is 2,077 dwellings.
- 3.2 On the supply side, my assessment is that the five year supply position at 1st October 2018 is 1,892 dwellings. Consequently, the five year supply equates to **4.56 years** as summarised below.

Table B – Summary position regarding the five year requirement plus buffer from 1st October 2018

	Requirement	
A	Local Plan housing requirement (1 st April 2008 to 31 st March 2028)	5,600
B	Annualised net Local Plan housing requirement (5,600 / 20 years)	280
C	Five year net Local Plan housing requirement	1,400
D	Net housing shortfall 1 st April 2008 to 30 th September 2018 (2,940 requirement – 2,362 completions)	578
E	Five year requirement including backlog (C + D)	1,978
F	Buffer	99
G	Total supply to be demonstrated (E + F)	2,077
H	Annual average (G / 5)	415
	Supply	
I	Five year supply 1 st October 2018 to 30 th September 2023	1,892
J	Years supply (I / H)	4.56

- 3.3 The implications of the Council not being able to demonstrate a deliverable five year supply are addressed by Mr Lewis.

4. Other housing land supply matters

Clitheroe's Housing Land Supply

- 4.1 Because the Standen strategic site will not deliver in full in the plan period to 2019, the housing requirement for Clitheroe as set out in the table at 4.12 of the Core Strategy will not be met. The Council's own figures indicate that there is a shortfall of 311 dwellings in Clitheroe by 2028.

Affordable Housing

- 4.2 There is a pressing need for new affordable housing in Ribble Valley. The annual target of 75 affordable homes is significantly below the actual level of need but even this will not be met by the end of the plan period.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 In summary, my evidence demonstrates:
- The Council cannot demonstrate a deliverable five year supply of housing land;
 - The Core Strategy requirement for Clitheroe to 2028 will not be met unless additional sites are approved; and
 - There is a pressing need for affordable housing, which is not being met by the Council's supply.
- 5.2 The implications of these conclusions are addressed by Mr Lewis.