

Wycombe District Local Plan Examination

Matter 2 – The Plan’s Strategy

Examination Statement by Nexus Planning on behalf of Inland Homes

1. This Examination Statement has been prepared by Nexus Planning on behalf of Inland Homes in support of draft site allocation HW8.

Question 3) Is the Plan's Spatial Strategy (Policy CP2) consistent with the requirement of the NPPF to promote sustainable development?

Distribution of development

1. Section 6.2.3 of the Sustainability Appraisal (September 2017) (document reference WDLP2) ("SA") outlines that the Spatial Strategy is informed by identifying sites in the most sustainable locations in accordance with the Council's settlement hierarchy.
2. Within supporting document TP1 (Topic Paper: The Strategy), the Council has justified the Spatial Strategy set out at draft Policy CP2 of the Plan. Paragraphs 5.30 - 5.32 of TP1 set out that circa 60% of the proposed housing growth is to be focussed at the High Wycombe Urban Area as it is the most sustainable settlement in the district.
3. As set out in our representations relating to draft Policy CP2, we support the approach of focussing the majority of the proposed growth at High Wycombe. Draft Policy CP3 presents High Wycombe as a Tier 1 settlement and the SA concludes at Table 6 (page 24) that this is the most sustainable settlement in the District. Therefore, the focus of growth at this location is consistent with Core Planning Principle 11 (NPPF Paragraph 17), which seeks to focus significant development in locations which are sustainable.

Level of growth

4. Spatial Strategy Option B (as assessed in the SA) seeks to provide a level of housing growth consistent with the capacity identified within the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment. This includes sites in the Green Belt that perform weakly against the Green Belt purposes.
5. Notwithstanding Inland Homes' separate objections to the exclusion of particular sites, we support the inclusion of poorly performing Green Belt land as housing allocations within the Plan. It is clear from the HELAA that there are insufficient sites available on land outside the Green Belt to provide anywhere close to the full Objectively Assessed Needs ("OAN"). Failure to provide the OAN in full is contrary to Paragraph 47 of the NPPF, and would not result in a positively prepared plan. Accordingly, this would fail two of the tests of soundness set out at Paragraph 182 of the NPPF.

Question 5) Has the Plan's Spatial Strategy been positively prepared, is it justified and will it be an effective mechanism for delivering growth over the Plan period?

a) Does the Plan's Spatial Strategy represent an effective approach to delivering sustainable development (Policy CP1) over the Plan period?

1. Please see our response to Question 3 of this Matter.

c) Does the Plan's Spatial Strategy effectively link transportation, employment and housing growth?

1. Focussing the majority of housing growth at the High Wycombe Urban Area maximises the opportunity to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling through locating housing close to existing transport links and employment. This is consistent with Core Planning Principle 11 (Paragraph 17(11)) of the NPPF.

Question 6) Has the Settlement Strategy (Policy CP3) been positively prepared, justified and will it be effective in delivering sustainable growth?

1. Please see our response to Question 3 of this Matter.

Question 7) How many Neighbourhood Plans are there in Wycombe, where are they and what is their status?

1. There is no Neighbourhood Plan or designated Neighbourhood Area that covers the Site.