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Bristol Draft Local Plan – Examination in Public

Matter 2 Statement: Housing Land Needs

Issue 2.1:

Objectively Assessed Housing Need

Q2.1 Is the objectively assessed housing need (OAHN) for Bristol of 3,380 dwellings per annum (60,840 during the plan period) based on an approach consistent with Paragraph 61 of the NPPF?

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 61 establishes that housing needs should be assessed using the Standard Method as an advisory starting point.

The OAHN for Bristol of 3,380 dwellings per annum includes the requirement for 35% urban uplift which is required in Bristol. There has been no exceptional circumstance to justify an alternative approach put forward by the Council and therefore the approach of using the Standard Method +35% uplift is consistent with Paragraph 61 of the NPPF.

Q2.2: Given the Council's response to PQ64 and PQ65, what relevance does the 2022 ORS Local Housing Need Report appended to document TPC004 have for the issue of establishing the objectively assessed housing need?

The Council's response to PQ64 and paragraphs 1.1-1.4 of the TPC004 sets out that the objectively assessed housing need for Bristol over the plan period is determined by the standard method which equated to a total of 3,380 per annum.

The response provides no exceptional circumstances that would justify an alternative approach which reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals.

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The Council's response to PQ65 reaffirms this position by stating that the 2022 ORS report explored an alternative calculation, the outcome of which broadly coincided with the locally derived element of the standard methodology. Given that the demographic trends and market signals broadly align with the Standard Method approach then the 2022 ORS Local Housing Need Report has little relevance in establishing the objectively assessed housing need and the Standard Method with the urban uplift, as required by the PPG and NPPF should be used.

Housing Requirement and Capacity

Q2.3: Is the requirement for an average minimum of 1,925 new homes per annum over the plan period to 2040 positively prepared and justified having regard to identified constraints, including but not limited to land availability, viability and infrastructure? In particular:

- a) Is the overall capacity figure of 39,798 dwellings based on a robust assessment of potential supply (including windfalls and 'urban potential')?**

No, Dandara Living do not believe that the overall capacity figure of 39,798 dwellings is based on a robust assessment of potential supply, given that the evidence base for this figure is inaccurate. There is no thorough analysis of the assumed housing capacities for the broad location assessments set out within Appendix A of BCC's SHLAA (April 2024) which is considered to be substantially underestimated and based on inappropriately low density. As set out within Dandara Living's Matter 12 Statement, the density ranges and dated Urban Living SPD have been used to inform regeneration frameworks and master plans and subsequently used to determine development capacities for the Development Strategy policies and regeneration areas. This is inconsistent with the Framework requirement to seek a significant shift

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in housing density and as a result means the overall capacity figure cannot be concluded to be based on a robust assessment of potential supply. Rather than assess individual site capacities the 'bottom up' application of an SPD is constraining development potential and the ability for Bristol to achieve its identified housing need.

The Urban Potential Assessment was fully carried out in 2016 and updated in 2020 which is considered out of date and does not provide a robust assessment of the potential supply, especially given the context of the housing need within BCC. This is significant in order to justify a housing target that does not meet housing needs.

b) Have all available sources of land for residential development been fully considered and robustly assessed?

No, the SHLAA (April 2024) sets out that sites have been identified through the periodic Call for Sites process, however the last formal Call for Sites consultation was held by the Council in February 2018 as confirmed at paragraph 1.7 of the Development Allocation and Designations Process Topic Paper (April 2024). Whilst there may have been ad hoc submissions of sites since that time, it is questionable why a formal Call for Sites would not take place in the intervening period given the delay to the Local Plan preparation. This would indicate that not every available source of land has been able to be fully considered and robustly assessed given the last call for sites was held 7 years ago. This process should be updated before a housing target significantly below identified housing need can be considered sound.

c) Does the evidence demonstrate there are no other sustainable sites for residential development within the plan area during the plan period, including sites allocated or in use for other uses?

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No, as identified above, the evidence to support site availability and suitability is not up to date or robust.

- d) Is the Plan sufficiently proactive in seeking to maximise the delivery of residential development on appropriate sites, including those which may currently be in alternative uses (such as existing employment land)?**

The Bristol Urban Potential Capacity Assessment 2020-2040 (November 2023), which assessed capacity of potential sites based on the density ranges outlined in Policy UL2. As set out within Dandara Livings Regulation 19 Representation (paras 5.2-5.3) and subsequent Matter 12 Statement, these densities are particularly low and do not correlate with the average density or higher densities being delivered. It is unclear why there would not be a policy commitment towards achieving densities which more appropriate aligns with the density of development coming forward. The Assessment also states it has not assessed any sites currently safeguarded as industrial land, this is despite many parts of the regeneration areas currently designated as PIW (Protected Industrial and Warehouse) being proposed for residential uses. The Council's own evidence base and Development Strategy therefore indicates there is further capacity to deliver residential development on appropriate sites, but these have not been proactively identified and capacity tested as part of the evidence base to inform the draft Local Plan.

- e) Given many allocations set out in Policy DA1 are for mixed-uses and contain only 'estimated' capacities, is there sufficient certainty about the scale of delivery envisaged from these sites?**

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No, as identified above, the assessment of site capacity has not been thoroughly tested and there is insufficient certainty about the scale of delivery envisaged from sites. The evidence demonstrates there is certainty that the capacities are being under-estimated.

f) In establishing the housing requirement, is the 15% 'headroom' figure justified?

No, the 15% 'headroom' figure is not justified, especially in the context that the housing requirement set out by the draft Local Plan of 1,925 dpa is 1,455dpa below the local housing need established by the Standard Method.

The Council's response to PQ66 states that *"The 15% buffer is a reasonable provision that builds in some protection against non-delivery, particularly for those sources of capacity that are less certain such as urban potential"*. Protection against non-delivery is not a justified response to under providing on OAHN and clearly demonstrates that the draft housing policy requirements set out within the Local Plan have not been prepared positively.

Paragraph 60 of the Framework is clear that 'the overall aim should be to meet as much of an area's identified housing need as possible'. The housing requirement needs to be positively planned and set as a minimum in line with paragraph 61 of the Framework. To this end, the capacity demonstrated by the SHLAA needs to be included within the housing requirements for Bristol.

g) Have the effects of meeting the OAHN been robustly assessed?

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No, no further testing of the OAHN of 3,380dpa has been set out within the evidence base of the draft Local Plan and has seemingly been dismissed as an option outright. A combination of density ranges, lack of appropriate capacity testing, dated Call for Sites, industrial site exclusion etc has resulted in a huge gap in the assessment of opportunities to meet or get closer to meeting Bristol's identified housing need.

Q2.4: Further to the above, the response to PQ18 refers to sites suggested as part of the Regulation 19 consultation. This concludes that development is not ruled out by the local plan as they are not in any designations that would prejudice some form of development. Does this have any implications for the estimated capacity of the City, or the assumptions made relating to windfall or urban capacity?

Yes, this again demonstrates that a thorough assessment of the availability and capacity of sites has not been undertaken and the Development Strategy and associated housing target, which is significantly below OAHN, cannot be concluded to be positively prepared or justified.

Q2.5: Has the Council assessed the likely effects of delivering a higher level of housing within the Plan area?

No, no alternative testing has been set out within the evidence base of the draft Local Plan.

Q2.6: Having regard to the above, is there substantive evidence to suggest that the requirements of paragraph 11b of the NPPF, as set out above, have been met? What are the adverse impacts of seeking to meet the OAHN?

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As set out within Dandara Living's Regulation 19 representation (paras 3.1-3.3 and 6.1-6.4) there is no substantive evidence provided by BCC in either their evidence base or the responses set out in EXA024 that sets out the adverse impacts of seeking to meet the OAHN.

The draft Local Plan fails to propose an objectively assessed housing need at all and furthermore fails to demonstrate any exceptional circumstances to justify an alternative approach, other than to vaguely state '*using a method which is better able to objectively assess housing needs in Bristol*' with no justification. The draft Local Plan sets out at Para. 6.4 that the standard method requires 3,380dpa before concluding at para. 6.7 that the level of housing that can be accommodated in Bristol is 1,925dpa with para. 6.8 stating neighbouring authorities will address the approach to unmet needs they are able to accommodate in their local plans, with no actual reference to what that need is. This specifically fails the requirements of paras. 26 and 27 of the NPPF and therefore the strategy cannot be considered positively prepared or justified as explicitly stated by the Framework. As a basic requirement the wording in the draft Local Plan should explicitly state the objectively assessed need, what it proposes to deliver and identify what shortfall is being sought through Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring authorities.

Q2.7: Should the Plan set out the scale of unmet housing need and set out how the issue is expected to be addressed, including the role of other local authorities?

Yes, the scale of the unmet housing need should be set out, especially as the Council are reliant upon other local authorities helping to meet that need. The draft Local Plan currently states at para 6.8 that: "*although part of the assessed need for new homes can be met within Bristol, the evidence indicates additional homes will need to be delivered elsewhere to ensure that the city's need for new homes does not go unmet. Bristol City Council has worked with the neighbouring councils of North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bath & North East*

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Somerset to consider whether and to what extent those needs could be met in those areas. The local plans for those areas will address the approach to any unmet needs which they are able to accommodate". Without setting out what the unmet housing need is, it is unclear how other local authorities could aid Bristol through the preparation of their own local plans.

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