

**COMMITTEE:** PLANNING  
**DATE:** 28 August 2017  
**SUBJECT:** Update on Housing Delivery  
**REPORT OF:** Director of Strategy, Planning & Regeneration

---

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose:** To provide Members with an update on housing delivery and the current position in relation to the Five Year Housing Land Supply

**Contact:** Matt Hitchen, Senior Planning Policy Officer  
1 Grove Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4TW  
Tel no: (01323) 415253  
E-mail: [matt.hitchen@eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:matt.hitchen@eastbourne.gov.uk)

**Recommendations:** That Members note the contents of this report.

---

## **Executive Summary**

- Housing delivery in Q1 2017/18 was 5 (five) net additional dwellings towards the annual target of 245 units
- A total of 113 units were given permission in Q1 2017/18
- There are 556 net additional dwellings with permission that have yet to commence across 74 sites
- There are 320 units under construction across 50 development sites
- The Housing Land Supply currently stands at 2.9 years.

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on housing delivery in the first quarter of the 2017/2018 financial year. It is part of the quarterly feedback to Planning Committee on housing delivery rates.
- 1.2 This report identifies the number of units granted permission in the year, the number of units with permission that have yet to start construction, the total number of units completed, and updates Members on the latest position in relation to the Five Year Housing Land Supply.

### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 National planning policy places considerable weight on the delivery of new

housing. Delivery of housing is assessed in two ways: the number of residential units built; and the number of residential units due to be built in the next five years (known as the Five Year Housing Land Supply). The two are linked to the extent that a reduction in the number of units built will increase the number needed to be built in the next five years to make up for the shortfall.

- 2.2 The identification of a Five Year Housing Land Supply is a requirement of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). A Five Year Housing Land Supply means identifying sufficient housing land in order to meet the cumulative annual housing delivery target for the next five years (i.e. annual target multiplied by five), plus a buffer. This buffer should be 5% unless there is a record of persistent under-delivery of housing, in which case the buffer increases to 20%.
- 2.3 The NPPF states that Local Plan policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. It also states that where relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted *unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole (NPPF, para 14)*.
- 2.4 This means that if a five year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated, there is a significant risk that refusals of planning permission for residential development could be overturned on appeal with associated cost implications, even if the application is contrary to Local Plan policy.
- 2.5 National policy and case law has shown that the *'demonstration of a 5 year supply is a key material consideration when determining housing applications and appeals'* (*Planning Practice Guidance, Paragraph: 033 Reference ID: 3-033-20150327<sup>1</sup>*).
- 2.6 The Government's White Paper *'Fixing Our Broken Housing Market'*, published in February 2017, includes a proposal to introduce a new housing delivery test to assess the number of residential units delivered against the local plan target from November 2017. Depending on the percentage of the target delivered, different responses will be required with the intention of boosting the supply of housing.

### **3.0 Housing Completions**

- 3.1 The Core Strategy (adopted 2013) plans for the delivery of 5,022 net additional dwellings between 2006 and 2027. As of the end of 2016/17, a total of 2,576 units had been delivered since the start of the plan period. This leaves 2,446 units to be delivered until the end of the plan period at an

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-land-availability-assessment>

annual average of **244.6** units per year.

- 3.2 Falling housing delivery rates over recent years has meant that the total number of units that have been delivered is now less than the cumulative target. At this point in the plan period, **2,640** units should have been delivered, so actual delivery is 64 units short of the number of houses that should have been delivered at this point in the plan.
- 3.3 In the first quarter of the 2017/18 year, a total of 5 net additional dwellings were completed. The overall provision of 5 net dwellings were provided across 7 sites, with two sites delivering a net loss of housing. The delivery of 5 units is the lowest delivery by a significant margin of any quarter within the plan period.

#### **4.0 New Commitments**

- 4.1 During the first quarter of the 2017/18 financial year, a total of 113 net additional units were granted permission across 17 sites.
- 4.2 Of the 113 units granted permission, 73 units (65%) were committed through prior approval for a change of use of office to residential at 20 Upperton Road under permitted development. In total only 3 of the 17 sites resulted in a net increase of 5 or more units, with the majority only resulting in one additional unit.
- 4.3 It has been identified that a total of **5** net additional units across 4 development sites were refused planning permission in the first quarter of 2017/18.
- 4.4 It is important to recognise that not all of the units granted permission will be built. Evidence over the Core Strategy plan period (since 2006) suggests that 76% of units granted permission were completed. At a 76% delivery rate, meeting the target of 245 units per year would require 322 units to be granted permission each year.

#### **5.0 Total Commitments**

- 5.1 As at the end of the first quarter of 2017/18, there were **556** net additional dwellings with permission that have yet to commence across 74 sites. This includes:
- 102 units at Bedfordwell Road Depot
  - 73 at 20 Upperton Road
  - 61 units at the former Caffyns site on Upperton Road
  - 36 units at 2-4 Moy Avenue
  - 35 units at St Anne's House, St Anne's Road

5.2 As at the end of the first quarter of 2017/18, there were **320** units under construction across 50 development sites. This includes:

- 72 units at Site 1, Sovereign Harbour
- 70 units at Site 7c, Sovereign Harbour
- 15 units at the Courtlands Hotel, Wilmington Gardens
- 13 units at land at Sumach Close

## **6.0 Housing Delivery Test**

6.1 There is a proposal in the Housing White Paper to introduce a new Housing Delivery Test on local authorities from November. The test will identify the number of houses built against the housing target over a rolling three year period. The first assessment period for the Housing Delivery Test will be for financial years April 2014 – March 2015 to April 2016 – March 2017.

6.2 If during the first assessment period the delivery of housing falls below 95% of the target, local authorities will be required to publish an action plan setting out an understanding of the key reasons for the situation and the actions that could be taken to get home-building back on track. Where local authorities are delivering less than 85% of their housing target will also be required to add a 20% buffer to their Five Year Housing Land Supply calculation.

6.3 An analysis of housing delivery over the first assessment period shows that 576 units were delivered against a target of 720, which equates to 80% delivery. This means that from November 2017, the Five Year Housing Land Supply buffer will be increased to 20% and an action plan on housing delivery will need to be produced.

## **7.0 Five Year Housing Land Supply Assessment**

7.1 Following the end of the first quarter 2017/18, there are 2,441 units to deliver over the remaining 9 and three quarter years of the plan period. This equates to 250.4 units per year.

7.2 The delivery of only 80% of the housing target over the last five years, including just one year of exceeding the target, indicates a persistent under-delivery of housing in Eastbourne, and along with the results of the housing delivery test that will apply from November, this suggests that the 20% buffer should now be used.

7.3 The additional 20% buffer equates to an additional years' worth of the target, making the Five Year Housing Land Supply requirement for Eastbourne **1,502** units. Eastbourne Borough Council is required to identify sufficient land to meet this requirement.

7.4 The current assessment of the Five Year Housing Land Supply identifies that

as of the end of the first quarter 2017/18, Eastbourne has a supply of housing land equivalent to **876** units. This currently consists of sites with permission, including those where construction has started and those where construction has not started. This is because it is currently not possible to identify any housing development sites that have the potential to come forward within the next five years.

- 7.5 The Assessment shows that Eastbourne currently has a **2.9 year** supply of housing land (or **58%** of the Five Year Housing Land Supply requirement including 20% buffer). Eastbourne Borough Council is 626 units short of having a Five Year Housing Land Supply (including 20% buffer).
- 7.6 As a five year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated, current policies cannot be relied upon to justify a refusal of permission and therefore there is a significant risk of future planning refusals for residential development being overturned at appeal.
- 7.7 The under-delivery of housing continues to increase the Five Year Housing Land Supply requirement, as under delivery increases the annual target used to calculate the requirement. In addition, a low rate of sites being granted permission means that the number of units in the Five Year Housing Land Supply is falling. Both factors combined mean that it will be very difficult for a Five Year Housing Land Supply to be identified in the near future, unless additional housing development sites can be identified.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

- 8.1 National planning policy places considerable weight on the delivery of new housing, and the five year housing land supply is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 8.2 The delivery of just 5 net additional units in the first quarter 2017/18 is a significantly low level of delivery and is the lowest within the plan period so far. This low level of delivery in the first quarter is likely to impact on meeting the annual target of 245 units.
- 8.3 Eastbourne currently has a housing land supply equivalent to 876 units, which represents **2.9 years** supply of land, including the 20% buffer required as a result of persistent under-delivery of housing and the housing delivery test. Therefore a five year housing land supply cannot be demonstrated, which means local plan policies relevant to the supply of housing are out of date and cannot be relied upon to refuse development.
- 8.4 The process for identifying additional deliverable sites is currently underway through the Strategic Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment. This study is due to be completed over the autumn 2017, and will inform the production of a new Local Plan. The more sites identified as developable

through this process, the closer to the Five Year Housing Land Supply requirement will be. This will give Members better control over approvals and greater comfort that refusals won't be overturned on appeal.

- 8.5 In addition, the introduction of the 'housing delivery test' in the Housing White Paper also means that under-delivery of housing in previous years will make it more difficult to achieve a Five Year Housing Land Supply in the future.

---

### **Background Papers:**

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were:

- Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan 2006-2027
- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
- Fixing Our Broken Housing Market – Government White Paper (2017)

To inspect or obtain copies of the background paper, please refer to the contact officer listed above.

## Appendix 1 – Housing Delivery Statistics by Ward – First Quarter 2017/18

Ward	Net Completions in Year	Net Newly Committed in Year	Total Commitments (not commenced)	Total Under Construction
Devonshire	3	23	83	52
Hampden Park	0	0	0	15
Langney	2	7	33	2
Meads	0	0	39	41
Old Town	0	0	5	7
Ratton	0	0	5	1
Sovereign	0	0	0	156
St Anthonys	0	0	41	24
Upperton	0	83	350	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>320</b>

*A full list of sites in each category is available on request*