



Mr Robert Yuille

Examiner

Dated: 10 August 2017

Examination Reference: 05/RV/ARASNP

Dear Mr Yuille

Thank you for your letter dated 25 July 2017 regarding the Council's definition of 'small scale' sites.

It is important to recognise from the start that it is not the District Council who is seeking to define a 'small site'. In developing draft policy H1 the Neighbourhood Plan Group sought to align their proposal with what they considered to be a definition of small site in Council Policy.

As set out in our previous response, the Council does not have a policy definition of small site. The plan promoters therefore agreed to remove reference to SDC policy.

The definition of small site does vary with context. For example the definition of a minor application for decision making processes is 10 units. This affects delegations to officers and certain procedural requirements. In the Affordable Housing section of the Core Strategy and related SPD the threshold is drawn at 1-9 units and 10+ units.

You have raised a specific query on the definition used in the 5 Year Land Supply report (5YHLS). The recently published 2017-2022 5YHLS report identifies sites of 5 or more as 'larger sites', as agreed through the latest 2017 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Methodology. The identification of 'small sites' (those of less than 5 dwellings) simply reflects the site/broad location size threshold for assessment as set out in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) to the NPPF.

The PPG suggests the assessment of land availability should consider all sites and broad locations capable of delivering 5 or more dwellings¹. This has set the basis for undertaking different assessments of sites through the SHLAA. 'Small' sites of less than 5 dwellings receive a basic assessment and are not included on the SHLAA maps. The 'larger' sites of 5 or more dwellings receive a more detailed assessment. Only the 'larger' sites are published on the SHLAA maps, however all assessed sites (<5 dwellings and 5+ dwellings) contribute to the 5YHLS Report. This is purely a technical, standard threshold which ensures the process is not unduly onerous.

The use of that threshold in SHLAA and 5YHLS is entirely unconnected to our comments on the Neighbourhood Plan and as such there is no inconsistency. The previous comments in our letter of 17 April 2017, in response to your letter of 10 April 2017 (ref: 01/RV/ARAS/NP) still remain valid,

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

particularly with regard to an artificial limit of 5 dwellings and limited evidence base behind limiting applications for new housing to this extent.

Kind regards

Ryan King

Planning Policy