

Mr Tony Blackburn,  
Programme Officer,  
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7<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Dear Tony,

**INSPECTOR'S MATTERS, ISSUES AND QUESTIONS  
(Stage 2 Hearing Sessions)  
Consultee ID: 52**

1. The following letter is provided as a statement on behalf of Persimmon Homes Lancashire in relation to selected questions set out within the Inspectors Matters, Issues and Questions relating to the Fylde Local Plan Examination Stage 2 Hearing Sessions.

**Matter 5 – Housing – Site Allocations and Delivery**

***Issue 9 – Does the Plan set out a positively prepared strategy for the supply and delivery of housing that is justified, effective and consistent with national policy?***

**In relation to the 5 year supply does the Plan clearly set out annual targets, completions to date, the approach to catching up the shortfall and the buffer to be applied?**

2. Persimmon Homes has no comment to make in response to this question.

**Appendix 2 of the Plan includes a housing trajectory for the Plan period. In light of the Council's recent evidence this is proposed to be updated. However is it necessary to include site specific details given it may quickly become out of date? Should a housing trajectory graph be included in the Plan?**

3. It is felt useful to have the housing trajectory table, but as it stands it requires considerable updating and a number of the assumptions in relation to timing etc. are unrealistic. We have previously set these out, but they are contained again here for ease of reference:
  - a. Sites with outline planning are sometimes shown to commence delivery this coming year. Note should be taken of the average period for determination of applications in Fylde as this approach is not robust. It is even less realistic to assume this where the approval has been gained through the land owners directly or a promotional or strategic land company, as further marketing, legal negotiations and subsequent planning applications will all be required prior to commencement.

- b. At least one permission listed has expired, but is still shown for short term delivery.
  - c. A couple of sites with permission (through applications and appeals) that are being marketed currently don't appear in the supply. What is the reasoning for this inconsistent approach?
  - d. Now that the 2016-18 year has passed can the delivery numbers can be updated and a more informed trajectory drafted.
  - e. To assume all sites above 300 units will be developed by 2 developers is unsound. Persimmon Homes will develop the former Pontins site through a single outlet and numbers are expected to be nearer 45 dwellings per year. Incidentally the dwelling numbers and completions to date are also incorrect.
4. We agree that it may be more appropriate to include a housing trajectory graph and such a table containing the site specifics to be included within the Annual Monitoring / Five Year Supply Position Statements.

**Site Allocations - Policies SL1-SL5**

**In light of further planning permissions that have been brought to my attention, do these policies need updating with new sites?**

- 5. Persimmon Homes have no site specific comments to make but acknowledge the need to ensure the latest position is reflected in the policies.

**Policy SL5 relates to sites that are not within Strategic Locations for Development (SLD). Is its inclusion within the chapter on SLD appropriate and effective?**

- 6. Persimmon have no specific objection to its placement within the Strategic Location chapter but do feel that that proposed sites outside Strategic Locations would be more appropriately placed within Chapter 10.

**The policies refer to masterplans and design codes for each site without planning permission in the case of Policies SL1 and SL2 and specific strategic sites without planning permission for Policies SL3 and SL4. Are these justified and consistent with Policy M1?**

- 7. No, Persimmon do not believe that this blanket requirement is justified or consistent when some sites are only just over 10 units, and a number of the larger ones are likely to come in as single applications. It is not considered positive planning to require such provisions when the standard requirements of Development Management can protect and ensure the delivery of comprehensive development (the only reason the Council give for their requirements).

**Is the methodology for site assessment and selection robust and justified?**

- 8. Persimmon has no comment on this at present.

**Are the proposed housing site allocations in Policies SL1-SL5 justified and deliverable? Are the delivery rates for the sites reasonable and achievable?**

- 9. No it is not felt that in all cases delivery rates are reasonable or achievable. Please refer to our response to matter 5. We make no comment on individual site allocations.

**In Policy SL5 no sites are listed for Elswick as these will be determined as part of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP). What is the timescale for the NP and is this approach justified?**

10. Persimmon has no comment on this at present.

#### **Policy H1**

**H1b refers to performance monitoring in relation to housing delivery. Can the Council clarify the purpose of the rolling 3 year review period and how 'the delivery of uncommitted sites will be adjusted' if completions targets are missed by 20%? Is this justified and effective?**

11. This is for the Council to provide clarity, but Persimmon Homes would welcome the clarity. Without this clarity we do not feel that the plan in this respect can be considered justified.

#### **Policy H2 - Density and mix of new residential development**

**A minimum density of 30 dph is proposed under Policy H2. Is this justified across all development sites, whether small or large?**

12. Persimmon do not regard the policy to be unsound in its current wording but do acknowledge that flexibility considering the site locality and context should be considered as an addition.

**Does the policy adequately address the needs of different groups in the community in accordance with the first two bullet points in paragraph 50 of the Framework?**

13. Persimmon has no comment on this at present

**Should the policy include specific reference to the proportion of dwellings to be provided by size? Is this justified or could the data become out-of-date during the Plan period? Is it clear what proportions of dwelling size would be required in different locations?**

14. Persimmon Homes would strongly object to such a prescriptive requirement within the policy. This would almost certainly limit flexibility and therefore delivery across the borough. It is not clear across the borough what proportions of dwellings would be required and these figures would be based on the SMHA estimates and even older evidence documents.

**The policy requires the delivery of at least 20% of homes on sites of 20 or more dwellings to be designed to accommodate the elderly. Is this justified and based on robust evidence?**

15. 20% appears to be an arbitrary figure rather than one based upon the evidence. This is also not an appropriate policy for a blanket approach as some locations may not have the facilities and wider infrastructure to support an elderly population. The cost implications of such policies has not been considered fully or robustly as the additional costs included in the Economic Viability Assessment Addendum SD006 are significantly below those quoted in other literature and studies such as the EC Harris Report provided in 2014 on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government.

**Is the requirement for specialist accommodation to include compliance with the optional technical standard for wheelchair adaptable dwellings justified and based on**

**robust evidence of identified need? Has the impact of applying these standards on viability of schemes been considered? (Also see Policy GD7)**

16. Please see our response to the preceding question.

**Evidence set out in supporting text to Policy H2 states that rural areas have significantly fewer 1 and 2 bedroom homes than other parts of the Borough. Therefore whilst H2 states that 50% of developments of 10 or more dwellings should be 1-3 bed, 33% of home in rural settlements should be 1-2 bed. What is the source of this? Does the policy provide sufficient flexibility to react to market forces?**

17. Persimmon have no comment to make on this at the present time as it is for the Council to clarify.

#### **Policy H4 - Affordable housing**

**It has been suggested that Policy H4 should be amended so that residential developments at the Fylde-Blackpool periphery should provide financial contributions for affordable housing to be spent in Blackpool. Has this approach been considered by the Council and is it reasonable?**

18. Persimmon have no comment to make on this at the present time as it is for the Council to clarify

**Under tenure the policy refers to the provision of starter homes. Is this appropriate in light of the Housing White Paper?**

19. Persimmon support flexibility in the approach to affordable housing and request that care is taken in ensuring that the plan wide viability assessment and its conclusions correspond with the proposals which at present are based upon a proportion of Starter Homes.

#### **Policy H5, H6 and H7**

20. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time but would welcome further clarity from the Council.

#### **Matter 6 – General Development**

***Issue 9 – Does the Plan provide a robust framework for the management and delivery of development across the Borough that is justified, effective and consistent with national policy?***

21. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time.

#### **Policy M1**

**Policy M1 requires ‘each allocated site’ within the Strategic Locations for Development (SLD) to produce a masterplan and design code, to be approved by the Council and turned into SPDs.**

- a. **Is the policy justified and consistent with national policy?**
- b. **Have the timescales for producing masterplans and design codes for each allocated site been taken into account in considering the timescales for site delivery? Are there any implications for the housing trajectory?**
- c. **Is the policy consistent with the wording set out in Policies SL1-SL4 regarding masterplans and design codes?**

22. Persimmon Homes do not support this approach and feel that it is extremely onerous to the extent that it does not represent positive planning nor is it justified. Timescale implications for such a policy have almost certainly not been taken into account when the site delivery time frames are considered. To produce, consult and adopt such documents is likely to take the better part of between 6-12months. On a significant number of the sites this will offer no additional benefits than that of the development management process as it exists.

**Policy GD1 - Settlement boundaries**

**Policy GD1 refers to development being focussed on previously developed land within and immediately abutting the existing settlements. Does this relate to allocated sites and if so are settlement boundaries drawn around them? Are the boundaries around each settlement justified?**

23. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time.

**Will some settlement boundaries be determined through Neighbourhood Plans? If so, does this need to be referenced in GD1?**

24. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time.

**The policy refers to 'settlement development targets'. Is this appropriate and consistent with national policy?**

25. The word targets is not felt to represent positive planning as it appears to relate to a limit.

**Is it necessary to refer to agricultural land within a settlement boundary policy?**

26. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time.

**In relation to greenfield land within settlement boundaries paragraph 8.3 lists other matters that will be taken into consideration when considering development proposals. Should these matters be included in the policy? Would this be justified?**

27. If they are to be included, they should be within the policy. Persimmon Homes however, feel that they are not justified. The individual points are all included with other policies through out the document so we are unsure why this paragraph has been included.

**Policy GD2 – Green Belt**

28. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time.

**Policy GD3 - Areas of Separation**

29. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time.

**Policies GD4 and GD5 – Development in the countryside**

30. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time but would welcome additional clarity.

## Policy GD6 – Promoting Mixed Use Development

31. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time.

## Policy GD7 – Achieving Good Design in Development

**Do the various criteria, particularly under the section on general principles of good design, provide a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to development proposals? Are the requirements justified?**

32. It is not always clear the level of weight to be attributed to the principles. For example, inclusion of Secured by Design Principles could mean anything from a general consideration in the design of a layout to the full certification of dwelling design, and how does F differ from K?

33. In relation to point N & R specifically we address below. It is assumed that this does not refer to Optional Water Efficiency Standards as the Council state in the their own evidence that this cannot be justified.

34. The optional standards are just that – optional and need to be fully justified in order to be incorporated in to Local Policy.

**The Ministerial Statement (MS) of 25 March 2015 set out a new approach for the setting of technical standards for new housing comprising new additional Building Regulations on water and access and a new national space standard. The MS states that *‘the optional new national technical standards should only be required through any new Local Plan policies if they address a clearly evidenced need and where the impact on viability has been considered ...’*. Policy GD7 requires all new homes to *‘comply with all relevant design and quality codes in the National Technical Standards’*. Is this approach justified and based on robust evidence of identified need? Has the impact of applying these standards on viability and land supply been considered? (Also refer to Policy H2)**

35. Persimmon Homes Lancashire are fully supportive of the response of the HBF in relation to the Optional Technical Standards.

36. Paragraphs 174 and 177 of the NPPF make it clear that via the Local Plan process LPAs should assess the cumulative impact of policy burden, including housing standards, to ensure that it does not put implementation of the plan at serious risk.

37. In the recent Housing White Paper the Government have confirmed their view that the fundamentals of the Building Regulations system remain sound and that important steps were taken in the last Parliament. In relation to Space Standards, paragraph 1.55 states that *“the use of minimum space standards for new development is seen as an important tool in delivering quality family homes. However the Government is concerned that a one size fits all approach may not reflect the needs and aspirations of a wider range of households. For example, despite being highly desirable, many traditional mews houses could not be built under today’s standards. We also want to make sure the standards do not rule out new approaches to meeting demand, building on the high quality compact living model of developers such as Pocket Homes. The Government will review the Nationally Described Space Standard to ensure greater local housing choice, while ensuring we avoid a race to the bottom in the size of homes on offer.”*

38. The NPPG is clear in setting out its criteria which Local Planning Authorities must adhere to in setting out the use of the Option Space Standards within their Local Planning Policy. The criteria are as follows:

- **Need:** “evidence should be provided on the size and type of dwellings currently being built in the area, to ensure the impacts of adopting space standards can be properly assessed, for example, to consider any potential impact on meeting demand for starter homes.”
- **Viability:** “the impact of adopting the space standard should be considered as part of a plan’s viability assessment with account taken of the impact of potentially larger dwellings on land supply. Local planning authorities will also need to consider impacts on affordability where a space standard is to be adopted.”
- **Timing:** “there may need to be a reasonable transitional period following adoption of a new policy on space standards to enable”

39. Therefore these three stages must be overcome to ensure additional technical standards can be applied. Persimmon Homes Lancashire do not feel that the Council have provided justification to substantiate the inclusion of the optional technical standards.

#### Need

40. Persimmon have not seen any evidence of need.

#### Viability

41. The Council has naively assumed that an increase in the build costs of larger space standard compliant dwellings can be passed whole sale to customers. This is not the case. The impact therefore is for the landowner and/or developer to bear, and consequently the viability of schemes. Work at the national scale by EC Harris has shown that the percentage of costs due to space standards recovered are non linear and average about 60% for an additional 10sqm or more (*EC Harris, 2014, Housing Standards Review: Costs Impacts*). This will also vary across market areas.

42. The plotting of space standard house types has previously been shown (North Tyneside) to reduce the efficiency of a residential layout by up to 4%. This will have a negative impact on viability as well as previously set out above, the delivery and timing of houses in a borough with a systemic undersupply. The under utilisation of land will also have an impact on the land required as part of the next stage of the Local Plan – Allocations. This will mean an increased quantum of land is required to be found and allocated.

#### Timing

43. It is not the case that this can be an immediate change. Time needs to be factored in to allow current land deals to be adjusted accordingly; as well as a whole range of knock on effects for the locally specific requirements such as supply chain and optimising construction efficiencies. These changes will impact the timing of delivery of forthcoming developments.

### **Matter 7 – The Economy – Site Allocations and Delivery**

44. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time.

## **Matter 8 – The Environment**

***Issue 12 – Does the Plan set out a positively prepared strategy for the preservation and enhancement of the environment (natural, built and historic); the management of water and flood risk; and the promotion of renewable and low carbon energy generation within Fylde that is justified, effective and consistent with national policy?***

### **Policies ENV1 – ENV2 – Landscape and Biodiversity**

45. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time but welcome additional clarity.

### **Policy ENV3 – Existing Open Space**

46. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time.

### **Policy ENV4 – New Open Space**

47. Persimmon has no additional comments to make at this time other than to question if this approach is already being applied to those development of over 100 units recent approved. It is not our experience that it is, but it does not appear that such developments are unsustainable as a result. We would question for the justification for the additional requirement for developments over 100 units.

### **Policy ENV5 – Historic Environment**

48. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time.

### **Policies CL1-CL3 – Water Management, Flooding and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Generation**

#### **Are the provisions set out in Policy CL1 justified and consistent with national policy?**

49. Persimmon have no issues with the general provisions set out in CL1. The requirement for contributions to sea defences is not qualified to those sites directly impacting such defences in the event that CIL is not implemented.

**Does Policy CL2 apply to all new development? Is this justified? Is the provision of agreed discharge rates as part of any pre-application negotiations justified? Does the policy require developers to provide drainage measures beyond what is necessary for the site?**

50. No, it is not justified to agree discharge rates prior to the submission of an application. The advantages of doing so are understood, but this is not a justified approach.

### **Policy CL3**

51. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time.

## **Matter 9 – Community Facilities, Infrastructure and Transport**

### **Policy HW2 – Community Facilities**

52. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time but would welcome additional clarity.



**Policies INF1 and INF2 – Service Accessibility and Infrastructure and Developer Contributions**

53. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time.

**Policy T1 – Strategic Highway Improvements**

54. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time.

**Matter 10 – Monitoring Framework**

55. Persimmon Homes have no comments to make at this time and would welcome additional clarity.

56. Persimmon Homes are happy to discuss the contents of this response if required & would like to be kept informed. We would also like to be informed in the Local Plan Examination in Public with a view to participating in the hearings associated with the items covered in this response.

Yours Sincerely,



Rachael Graham

Persimmon Homes Lancashire