

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

**SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY REVIEW
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT**

**HEARING STATEMENT
IN RESPECT OF ISSUE 4**

CONSISTENCY WITH NATIONAL POLICY

**PREPARED BY PRO VISION PLANNING AND DESIGN ON
BEHALF OF BEMERTON FARMS**

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SOUTH WILTSHIRE CORE STRATEGY EiP

ISSUE 4: CONSISTENCY WITH NATIONAL POLICY

POSITION STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF BEMERTON FARMS

How consistent are these revised housing and employment figures with the aims of Government policy as set out in Planning For Growth and the objectives of the Core Strategy which include providing everyone with access to a decent, affordable home and delivering a thriving economy which provides a range of job opportunities to match a growing population?

1. Current National Policy: “Planning for Growth”

1.1 The Ministerial Statement of 23 March 2011 ‘Planning for Growth’ (The Minister of State for Decentralisation) sets out the Government’s clear expectation that the answer to development and growth should wherever possible be ‘yes’, except where this would compromise the key sustainable development principles set out in national planning policy.

1.2 Paragraphs 3.20 – 3.22 of our May 2011 representations deal specifically with the Planning for Growth Ministerial Statement.

1.3 A subsequent Ministerial speech by the Minister for Housing and Local Government¹ is attached as Appendix 1. It reinforced Government commitment to encouraging house building, which it sees as essential to increasing the pace of economic growth. The speech also confirms the Government’s commitment to being a pro-Sustainable Development Government. Although not National Policy in itself, it helps to “flesh out” “Planning for Growth” and clarify the role of housing development.

2. Emerging National Policy: The Localism Bill

2.1 The proposed Localism Bill sets out a series of proposals to shift power away from central Government and towards local people.

2.2 A key proposal in the Localism Bill is the proposed revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS’s). We have dealt with the implications of this in detail as part of our Issue 1 Hearing Statement.

2.3 Advice from Central Government to Chief Planning Officer’s regarding the revocation of Regional Strategies advises that:

¹ Made on 10 May 2011 at the Home Builder’s Federation Annual Lunch 2011

- Housing numbers set out in Development Plan Document's (DPD's) should be in line with current policy in PPS3² and should be defensible during the examination process³.
- Local Authorities should continue to collect and use reliable information to justify their housing supply policies⁴.

2.4 Whilst the Localism Bill proposes to allow Local Authorities to set their own housing numbers, that decision must continue to be soundly based.

2.5 However, as explained in our response to Issue 2, the evidence base put forward by the Council to justify the reduced housing and employment figures is fundamentally flawed. Notwithstanding the proposed revocation of RSS's and the emerging Localism Bill DPD's must continue to be based on reliable information in line with PPS3 and other national planning policy.

2.6 The underlying objective of current and emerging national planning policy is the need to deliver Sustainable Development. This is unchanged since the Core Strategy Submission Document was prepared.

2.7 Furthermore there are no new constraints (i.e. landscape, visual and historic impact) to development to those identified at the Proposed Submission Stage. There are therefore no sound reasons for significantly reducing proposed housing and employment figures.

3. The Objectives of the Core Strategy

The proposed reductions in housing and job numbers are not found on sound local evidence, the proposed figure of 9,900 dwellings is simply too low to meet housing needs and promote economic development in South Wiltshire. The delivery of only 9,900 dwellings would not:

- Reflect a housing delivery as ambitious as possible⁵;
- Reflect the strong presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the recent Planning for Growth Ministerial Statement;
- Maximise opportunities to deliver affordable housing to meet an acute need.

² Paragraph 11 of the letter to Chief Planning Officer's dated 6 July 2010 regarding Revocation of Regional Strategies

³ Paragraph 12 of the letter to Chief Planning Officer's dated 6 July 2010 regarding Revocation of Regional Strategies

⁴ Paragraph 11 of the letter to Chief Planning Officer's dated 6 July 2010 regarding Revocation of Regional Strategies

⁵ Paragraph 9.9 of the Wiltshire Council Housing Requirement Technical Paper Draft (January 2011)

4. Conclusions

4.1 The following proposed changes are unsound:

- a) FOC/01 in that it proposes to substitute 9,900 new homes for 12,400, and only targets 495 new homes per year instead of 620.
- b) FOC/02 in that it proposes to provide for about 10,400 new jobs instead of 13,900, and targets only 520 new jobs per annum instead of 690.
- c) FOC/03 in that it proposes to deliver 9,900 dwellings and 10,400 jobs across South Wilts, instead of 12,400 dwellings and 13,900 jobs, and in that it proposes to plan for only 6,060 homes and 29 hectares of employment land for Salisbury and Wilton instead of 7,480 homes and 36 hectares of employment land.

4.2 In addition to the reasons outlined in respect of issue 1 and 2, these changes are unsound because they do not accord with National Policy as outlined in paragraphs 3.20-3.22 of our May 2011 Representations and enlarged upon above. Nor (as outlined in 3.1 above) would these changes enable the achievement of the aims and objectives of the Core Strategy itself.

4.3 In the absence of any complete and reliable evidence to the contrary, the only way in which the Core Strategy can be made sound is to

- Reinstate in Strategic Objective 2, Strategic Objective 3 and Core Policy 1, the figures of 12,400 new homes and 13,900 new jobs (620 new homes per year and 690 jobs per annum), and
- Reinstate 7,480 homes and 29 hectares of employment land for Salisbury and Wilton in Core Policy 1.



The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

Minister of State

Minister for Housing and Local Government

Home Builders Federation Annual Lunch 2011

Date of speech 10 May 2011

Location Marriott Grosvenor Square Hotel, London

Draft text of the speech - may differ from the delivered version.

In recent years you had an ever changing parade of Housing Ministers addressing you.

Even though the faces changed the message remained the same.

You were told again and again to build more homes.

Targets were set.

Taxpayers' money was pumped into schemes.

And what happened?

We ended up building fewer homes than even during the Great Depression.

In opposition I set out a different approach - scrapping top down targets, and giving people the tools to get Britain building again.

As Shadow Housing Minister in 2008, I outlined how we would place incentives at the heart of our policy - the New Homes Bonus.

Some of you were sceptical.

Some of you probably still are.

But even the sceptics knew things had to change.

So in power we've moved swiftly...

New Homes Bonus

Within a year of being in Government, Local Authorities have already received the first of six years worth of New Homes Bonus cash.

I have been receiving letters from councils all over the country welcoming that money and telling me how it has started to change local opinion, among councillors and communities on the ground, to back more growth.

Incentives will deliver what people want in their neighbourhoods - bringing the benefits of new homes to the wider community.

That will be welcome news to you.

After all building homes is how you make your living.

It's how your companies are profitable.

It's how you grow your businesses.

And it's how you create jobs.

What you need is to be free, free to build.

What we need is a housing market that really works.

A market driven by those incentives...

freed from over-centralised planning.

A market liberated from unnecessary burdens and over-zealous regulations.

Bluntly, we need the housing market to work - but as Stewart Baseley suggested, to get this country back on its feet, and you can be part of this important process.

Economic Growth

Because getting house-building going is essential to increasing the pace of economic growth.

So having acted to cut the deficit to prevent us looking like the Greek, Irish or Portuguese economies...this Government is now going for growth.

In the Budget we introduced the FirstBuy scheme to help over 10,000 struggling First Time Buyers this year and next. Resource has also been given to Scotland, so across the UK.

We are scrapping the unfavourable Stamp Duty treatment for bulk purchases of new homes to encourage greater equity investment.

And we announced that we will accelerate the release of surplus public sector land.

My 'Build Now, Pay Later' scheme quite literally means that you'll be able to build homes and sell them, and only then pay for the land.

And we've made an historic commitment to reduce burdens on the house-building industry by March 2015.

I'd previously asked you in this room, the industry, to tell me which bits of red-tape were tying you in knots.

I've got that list and I'm gradually working my way through it.

But I don't want to see new bureaucracy get in the way either.

You might recall that there was some talk about a "Local Standards Framework" that was recently floated - the idea being that Local Authorities could decide what standards to apply to new homes, from a pre-agreed "menu"/list of different choices.

You've been discussing these ideas with Government.

There are fears that devolving control to Local Authorities may actually increase regulation.

Interestingly, councils aren't that keen either.

So I can tell you now that I don't propose pushing forward with the "Local Standards Framework".

Instead it will be for the industry, Local Authorities and Government to work together to find the right solutions.

Because I can tell you one thing for certain - today is the day when the Government piling on the regulations are over.

Because I know that the cumulative impact of bureaucracy, regulations and red-tape simply erodes viability.

Sustainable Development

But I want to go much further than just banishing building bureaucracy.

The Plan for Growth published alongside the Budget this year made it clear we will be a Pro-Sustainable Development Government.

And we'll shortly be publishing a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the new National Planning Policy Framework.

Now this is a document that will take over one thousand pages of Planning Law and a further six thousand pages of Guidance (much of it as you know contradictory) and replace the whole lot with one simple, short document!

No more PPS's. No more PPG's.

The Framework will be strong where it needs to be. It will have policies that support the Government's priorities for economic growth.

Almost all the recommendations from the Killian Pretty report have now been implemented and the Plan for Growth reiterated our commitment to taking forward the findings of the Penfold review.

But I still want to go further, for example.

We're consulting on allowing easier conversion of empty office buildings to homes.

And as you know, we're abolishing the regional tier of the planning system and simplifying the planning application process.

But I know it's not just about getting the right planning decisions - speed counts too for your business.

So we are introducing a 12-month Planning Guarantee - to ensure that bureaucracy doesn't get in the way of business.

Zero Carbon

We'll shortly announce final details on the definition for Zero Carbon homes.

This will be an historic moment in our drive forward to slash carbon emissions and tackle climate change.

And we'll do it without piling unfair costs on housebuilders.

It will be practical, workable and green.

Homes will be built to zero carbon.

Not just in design, but in reality - they way that they function!

But we're not trying to have you second guess how many Plasma TVs the home owner decides to hang on their wall.

And, in any case, that's already covered by other EU Carbon trading rules.

Conclusion

So this Government is committed to planning reform...to sustainable development...and to reducing regulation.

And whereas in Whitehall we have an overall One In... One Out policy - that's to say before you can introduce regulation, you have to remove something else first.

I want to do even better than that for the building industry.

So carry on bringing me your red tape and I'll absolutely delight in tasking my officials to slash that tape.

This is a continuing process - not a one-off exercise.

I will continue listen to your concerns and free you to do your job.

And together, I hope we can build the homes this country so desperately needs.

Thank you