



Craven Local Plan Examination

Matter 8

Statement by Craven District Council

Matter 8 – Housing Mix and Density (Policy SP3)

Hearing Day 6 – Thursday 18th October 2018 (Week 2)

September 2018

Issue 1 – Housing Mix

Q1. What is the justification for Policy SP3 a) which sets out a specific mix of house types that will be required as part of proposals for new residential development?

Council's Response

1. The justification for Policy SP3 a), which provides a general guide for achieving an appropriate overall mix of new housing across the plan area and across all tenures, is set out within the supporting text on pages 41 and 42 of the plan and within paragraphs 4.30 – 4.31 in particular. Paragraph 4.30 refers to document Ho013 – 'Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (November 2017)', which the Council commissioned in order to help fulfil the requirements of paragraph 50 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). The general view on the overall mix of new housing that the local population is likely to need over the plan period, which appears in paragraph 4.30 of the plan and is reflected in Policy SP3 a), originates from Chapter 7 of document Ho013 and from paragraph 7.16 in particular.

Q2. Is it appropriate to apply the same mix of house types across the plan area? For example, how would a decision-maker ensure that proposals for new development made an efficient use of land and promoted or reinforced local distinctiveness, especially in highly accessible urban locations?

Council's Response

1. Policy SP3 provides a general guide for achieving an appropriate overall mix of new housing across the plan area and is based on proportionate, up-to-date and robust evidence (document Ho013), which represents the best available. By using the general guides to mix and density set out in Policy SP3 a) and SP3 b), with the required flexibility set out in Policy SP3 c), a decision-maker will be able to make an informed and balanced planning judgement to ensure that new development contributes towards a general thrust of housing provision that matches identified needs as closely as possible; uses land efficiently to meet the district's objectively assessed need for housing; and promotes or reinforces local distinctiveness. The positive effect of Policy SP3 will be especially felt in the district's most accessible urban locations, where the majority of planned growth will occur.

Q3. Does Policy SP3 apply to all housing, including proposals for affordable housing?

Council's Response

1. Paragraph 4.30 of the plan sets out a broad assumption upon which the general guides to housing mix and density, provided in Policy SP3 a) and Policy SP3 b),

are based. This broad assumption originates from paragraph 7.16 of document Ho013 – ‘Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (November 2017)’ and states, “This overall mix is across all tenures and assumes a broad tenure split of 70% market and 30% affordable”. Therefore, in line with this broad assumption, Policy SP3 a) and Policy SP3 b) provide a general guide for achieving an appropriate overall mix and density of housing across the plan area and across all tenures, which includes affordable housing.

Q4. Does the Local Plan include sufficient flexibility to allow for changing circumstances in the mix of new housing required?

Council’s Response

1. Yes. Policy SP3 c) requires the general guides to housing mix and density provided in Policy SP3 a) and SP3 b) to be applied flexibly in order to take account of local variations in housing need and to achieve local plan objectives, which would include Plan Objectives PO4 and PO5 in particular. Furthermore, paragraph 4.34 of the plan states that the Council will have regard to “the most up to date evidence of need/demand, including the SHMA”, which provides the flexibility to take on board new evidence of changing circumstances, including, but not limited to any new Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).
2. It is also worth considering that the general view on housing mix contained in the current SHMA (document Ho013) is a long-term view extending to the whole plan period, which provides a robust forecast of the district’s likely future needs. This point is reinforced by the consistency of conclusions reached in the Council’s previous SHMAs dating back to 2011 – see Section 7 of the 2016 SHMA (document Ho012) and paragraphs 7.107 and 8.6 of Appendix 1 to the 2011 SHMA (document Ho006).

Finally, it is also worth mentioning that normal requirements for regular and rigorous monitoring and review of the Local Plan, including its supporting evidence and effectiveness in delivering new homes, will further ensure sufficient flexibility to allow for any changing circumstances in the mix of new housing required.

Issue 2 – Housing Density

Q1. What is the justification for Policy SP3 b) which sets out a standard density of 32dph across the plan area and across all tenures?

Council’s Response

1. The justification for Policy SP3 b), which provides a general guide for achieving an appropriate overall housing density across the plan area and across all tenures, is set out within the supporting text on pages 41 and 42 of the plan and within paragraphs 4.31 – 4.32 in particular. Paragraph 4.31 refers to document

Ho001 – ‘Approaching Housing Density and Mix (Feb 2017)’, in which the Council sets out its own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances, in accordance with paragraph 47 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

Q2. Is it appropriate to set out a density target for the whole plan area given the differences between towns such as Skipton and Settle and more rural areas?

Council’s Response

1. Evidence underpinning document Ho001 – ‘Approaching Housing Density and Mix (Feb 2017)’, is taken from 10 well-designed, approved housing schemes in a wide variety of local settlements, including the towns of Skipton and Settle and more rural areas such as the villages of Cononley, Clapham and Embsay. Figures 1 – 10 and Tables 1 – 2 of the document provide informative details of those 10 schemes. Based on that evidence, Policy SP3 b) provides a general guide for achieving an appropriate overall housing density across the plan area. In addition, Policy SP3 c) requires the local planning authority to apply that general guide flexibly, in recognition of the possibility that individual proposals may still need to take account of relevant variations in local or site-specific circumstances.

Q3. How does Policy SP3 ensure that development will optimise the use of land, especially in urban locations that are well served by public transport?

Council’s Response

1. Policy SP3 ensures that housing development will optimise the use of land by ensuring that the overall mix and, therefore, density of new homes provided matches, as closely as possible, the overall mix of new homes that the local population is likely to need over the plan period. The majority of planned growth will occur on greenfield extensions to urban areas with the best public transport services and so the positive effect of Policy SP3 will be especially felt in those locations.

Q4. Is it clear to decision-makers, developers and local communities what density of development will be required and where? Is the policy effective?

Council’s Response

1. Decision-makers, developers and local communities support a flexible approach to housing density that takes account of the need to provide the right type of housing for the local population, the need to use greenfield land efficiently, the need to reinforce local distinctiveness and the need to ensure viability and delivery. They do not support a prescriptive and inflexible policy requiring specific densities in specific locations as such a policy would not take full

account of what is important to them. Policy SP3 is clear in setting out a flexible approach to guide housing density, so that the general thrust of housing provision will match identified needs as closely as possible, even though density may vary from site to site according to local and site-specific circumstances. Therefore the policy is effective, in that it provides clear guidance, appropriate flexibility and a positive response to the relevant issues.

Craven District Council



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