



# planning FOCUS

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## Affordable housing



The council normally requires an element of affordable housing within residential development schemes and has provided written guidance on the subject for many years. During that time, we've tried to improve the guidance and keep it up-to-date with changes happening in policy, practice and evidence. The latest version is now available to download from our [Current local plan](#) web-page and is titled Negotiating Affordable Housing Contributions (October 2015). The approach should be familiar to many and continues to be based on a threshold of 5 dwellings or more, 40% on-site provision (or a payment-in-lieu where necessary), financial viability and pre-application discussions. However, you should find some useful additions in the latest revamp and the document should now be easier to use.

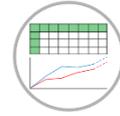
## Local green space



The National Planning Policy Framework provides for the designation of Local Green Space in local or neighbourhood plans. It enables communities to identify spaces that are important to them and need special protection, because of their significance to wildlife, culture, heritage, beauty, tranquillity or recreation.

The council has issued a general "call for sites" and is inviting applications to designate Local Green Space as part of the emerging local plan. Full details, including an online application form, are available from our [Planning policy news](#) web-page. Applications

should be submitted no later than Wednesday 2nd December, 2015. Once applications have been assessed, suitable sites will be proposed as Local Green Space in a draft version of the new local plan.



## Update on planning studies

Work is progressing on several new planning studies, the commissioning of which was reported in the last issue of Planning Focus. Once finalised, these studies will contribute to the evidence base of the emerging local plan.

### **Historic environment study**

The review of conservation areas being carried out in this study includes the mapping of open spaces and an assessment of their significance to the character, appearance and setting of conservation areas. This aspect is somewhat innovative and should be particularly useful in formulating policies and land allocations for the new local plan, as well as in determining planning applications. Adopting a non-standard approach does present new challenges, but the three partners involved – Historic England, Alan Baxter Ltd. and the planning policy team – have been able to discuss and resolve them together, along the way. We're now at the point where we can all look forward to seeing the final results.

### **Retail study**

Our retail study is being carried out by Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners (NLP) in partnership with the council's economic development and planning policy teams. In this study, we've been keen to acknowledge ongoing changes in retail and the wider nature and function of town centres. In particular, we've tried to adopt a holistic approach to our local centres – rather than splitting-off retailing for isolated study – and to explore issues of accessibility and connectivity.

### **Employment land review (ELR)**

Like the retail study, our employment land review is being carried out by NLP in partnership with the economic development and planning policy teams. As well as widely available economic data, primary evidence is being gathered and used. This comes from recent field work and a business premises survey, which have captured information, from local businesses, about Craven's business parks and industrial estates – their function, environment, capacity and congestion. Primary evidence and secondary data will be used together in the formulation of final recommendations, including the complex matter of how employment land may be aligned with job numbers, the housing strategy and demographics.

## Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

Consultants Arc4 have been working in partnership with the council's housing and planning policy teams and have now provided us with a new draft SHMA. This is being used to re-examine the council's strategy for the delivery of new homes, as reported in the following article on the objectively assessed need for housing. It will also provide updated evidence on the district's need for affordable homes. Concurrent preparation of the SHMA and ELR, and the consistency of economic and demographic evidence underpinning both, is helping us to align housing and employment strategies in the emerging local plan.

## Open spaces, playing fields and built facilities assessment

This study is being guided by a steering group of key stakeholders, including Sport England. Recent work has included detailed survey work and the assessment of current provision. The playing fields aspect of the study looks at football, rugby union, cricket, hockey and rugby league. The open space aspect looks at parks and gardens, amenity green space (including allotments), civic spaces, village greens, cemeteries and provision for children, young people and teenagers. The built facilities aspect looks at sports halls and swimming pools. The next step will be to consider the setting of appropriate standards of provision to be aimed for in the future, to ensure that all residents have good access to the high quality open spaces, playing fields and facilities they need.

## Highways modelling

This study is a partnership between the county highway authority, Jacobs and Craven District Council. It looks into the current and possible future impacts of traffic on specific road junctions and the wider highway network, and factors-in the possible traffic impacts of plans being pursued by neighbouring local authorities. Traffic surveys are continuing into the autumn and the traffic counts being produced will be fed into computer models to produce an impact analysis.

## Objectively assessed need for housing



Evidence emerging from the draft 2015 SHMA indicates an objectively assessed need (OAN) of 290 dwellings per year, on average, for the whole district, including the national park. In view of that emerging evidence, the council's policy committee has recommended that the next consultation draft of the new local plan should include a housing target of 256 dwellings per year, on average. This would provide 5,120 new homes over a 20-year plan period running from 2012 to 2032. Full details of what was discussed and agreed, including a distribution strategy for the proposed housing, are contained in the [committee report and appendices](#). The policy committee's decision must now be ratified at the next full council meeting, to be held on 1<sup>st</sup> December, before the housing target and distribution strategy can be taken forward. ■