

## **Barnsley Local Plan Examination**

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Ms P Tweed  
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Dear Ms Tweed,

### **Barnsley Local Plan Examination – Stage 3**

Pending the resumption of the hearing session for Site MU1, I am writing to follow up two items from the Stage 3 hearing sessions.

#### Policy H7 and Site Density

1. The Council clarified in its Hearing Statement response to Main Matter 12 that the aim to achieve a density of 'about 40 dwellings per hectare' as set out in Policy H7 applies to the net site area. A main modification (MM44) to Policy H7 is proposed to reflect this. In calculating the yields for the proposed housing and mixed use site allocations as set out in BMBC 029, deductions have been made to gross site areas to account for a range of constraints and reflect other circumstances such as masterplanning work or where planning permission has been granted on part of a site.
2. The Council will be reviewing some of these yields in response to specific issues raised in representations and there may be further changes for Site MU1 depending on discussions at the resumed hearing session. Subject to further consideration of Site MU1, it appears that appropriate adjustments have been made.
3. As discussed at the hearing sessions, there may be circumstances where a lower density would be more appropriate to secure development which properly reflects the form and character of its surroundings. I have already asked the Council to prepare a main modification to the final sentence of Policy H7 to achieve this and I will review the proposed wording in due course. The use of the word 'about' has also been

criticised in representations as being unclear and I would ask the Council to review this as part of the above modification.

4. However, based on the evidence before me and having regard to the circumstances of the Borough, my view at this stage is that the overall figure of 40 dwellings per hectare (net) set out in Policy H7 is justified. The details of my reasoning for this will be set out in my final report on the Examination of the plan.

## 2. Policy RE AC1

5. As discussed at the hearing sessions, the Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) of 18 June 2015 indicates that when determining planning applications for wind energy development involving one or more wind turbines, local planning authorities should only grant planning permission if:
  - the proposed development site is in an area identified as suitable for wind energy development in a Local or Neighbourhood Plan; and
  - following consultation, it can be demonstrated that the planning impacts identified by affected local communities have been fully addressed and therefore the proposal has their backing.
6. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) has been updated to reflect this and support the policy changes in the WMS. The WMS and PPG are material considerations in the determination of planning applications for wind turbines.
7. Local Plan Policy RE AC1 refers to the indicative Areas of Search for Wind Turbines as identified on the Policies Map and makes reference to a future Supplementary Planning Document which will identify final boundaries and development principles. Whilst the policy has been prepared having regard to the 'South Pennines Wind Energy Landscape Study' (EB132), that study pre-dates the WMS. In addition, the plan does not make clear the policy approach that would apply to proposals for wind turbines outside the Areas of Search as shown on the Policies Map. Having regard to the likelihood that the SPD would reduce the geographical extent of the Areas of Search, it would in effect be establishing policy rather than building upon and providing more detailed guidance on the adopted Local Plan policies. This would also be contrary to the guidance in the PPG. Overall, the plan's approach to onshore wind proposals as set out in Policy RE AC1 does not meet the requirements set out in the PPG.
8. For the above reasons Policy RE AC1 as submitted is unsound. If the Council wishes to identify suitable areas for onshore wind in the Local Plan this would need to be taken forward by further work including consultation and sustainability appraisal. Alternatively, a main modification would be necessary to delete the policy and its supporting text from the plan together with a proposed modification to remove Inset Map 6 from the Policies Map. Additional supporting text would be necessary to explain

that proposals for wind turbines will be considered against the PPG and WMS.

9. Policy RE1 sets out the general principles that will apply to low carbon and renewable energy developments but includes reference to wind turbines. Having regard to the above points, a main modification is necessary to delete the reference to wind turbines within the policy. Consequential changes to the supporting text to Policy RE1 will also be necessary to make clear that such proposals will be considered against the PPG and WMS.

10. I would be pleased to receive the Council's response to the above points on Policy RE AC1 depending on the option chosen.

Please let me know via the Programme Officer if there are any queries on the above points.

Yours sincerely

*Sarah Housden*

INSPECTOR