

Agenda
Session 9 – 14:00 Thursday 17 June 2021
Matter 7
Specific Housing Needs and Standards

This matter considers housing mix, housing standards/sustainable design, affordable housing, and the needs of gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople.

Policies to be covered by Matter 7: LPC01, LPC02, LPC03, LPC13 (Section 4)

Main Evidence Base

SD025 - Housing Need and Supply Background Paper

SD028 – Climate Change Background Paper

HOU001 – St Helens Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)
Update January 2019

HOU003 – Mid Mersey SHMA January 2016

GYP001 - Merseyside and West Lancashire Gypsy and Traveller
Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) January 2015

VIA001 - St Helens Economic Viability Assessment (EVA), December 2018

SHBC001 – Council response to Inspector’s preliminary questions

SHBC010 – St Helens Local Plan Draft Schedule of Modifications

Examination library link

<https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-examination-library/>

Participants

Please refer to the latest Hearings Programme (INSP009C)

Statements

St Helens Borough Council

Barratt Home

CPRE

Home Builders Federation

Lovell Partnership Ltd

Murphy Group

Peel L & P

Persimmon Homes NW

Redrow Homes NW

Story Homes

Taylor Wimpey

Main Modifications (MM) relevant to the session - MM034

Issue 1: Housing Mix

Policy LPC01 indicates that housing should address a range of house types and sizes as informed by the latest SHMA. Section 3 of the policy refers to 5% of homes on larger greenfield developments being bungalows. However, the SHMA Update (HOU001) indicates that it is difficult to quantify the need/demand for bungalows.

- 1. Is Section 1 of Policy LPC01 positively prepared, justified and effective in reflecting the needs of different groups in terms of size and type of housing?*
- 2. Does the reference to the 'latest SHMA' in Policy LPC01 result in a positively prepared and effective policy?*
 - 2a. Should Policy LPC01 also refer to other up-to-date evidence on needs?*
- 3. Taking into account the findings of the SHMAs and the need to make effective use of land, is the 5% requirement for bungalows on larger greenfield sites in Section 3 of Policy LPC01 justified (see SHBC001 – PQ60)?*
 - 3a. Should Section 3 of Policy LPC01 also recognise that other types of housing also meet the needs of older people (noting Section 5 of the policy)?*
- 4. Does Policy LPC01 make sufficient provision for the housing needs of older people?*
- 5. Does Policy LPC01 make sufficient provision for the housing needs of those who wish to build their own homes?*
- 6. Should Policy LPC01 make reference to a need for detached houses based on the low number of such homes within the housing stock (paragraph 2.5.1 of the Plan refers)?*

Issue 2: Housing Standards/Sustainable Design

Section 2 of Policy LPC01 seeks to apply the optional standards set out in Parts M4(2) and M4(3) of the Building Regulations. Section 4 of Policy

LPC13 requires that strategic housing developments meet 10% of their energy needs from renewable/low carbon sources.

- 7. Is the application of the optional standards for accessible and adaptable standards and wheelchair users for larger greenfield developments through Section 2 of Policy LPC01 justified having regard to paragraph 127 of the Framework, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the evidence base?*
- 8. Is there any justification for the use of the Nationally Described Space Standard (see SHBC001 – PQ61)?*
- 9. Should Policy LPC01 refer to a transitional period for the introduction of the optional standards?*
- 10. Is the requirement within Policy LPC13 for strategic housing sites to provide at least 10% of their energy needs from renewable/low carbon sources justified and consistent with national policy?*
 - 10.a. Does the introduction of the Future Homes Standard by 2025 have any implications for the requirements of Policy LPC13 insofar as it affects housing developments?*
- 11. Is Section 4 of Policy LPC13 consistent with the Government's current policy on energy performance set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of March 2015¹?*

The Council has suggested a MM to Section 4 of Policy LPC13 relating to new development achieving the equivalent of the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) Level 4.

Issue 3: Affordable Housing

Policy LPC02 includes a zonal approach to the provision of affordable housing based on the findings of the EVA. Sites in Zone 1 (Town Centre and Parr Wards) would not be expected to provide any affordable homes despite the provisions of paragraph 64 of the Framework (see SHBC001 – PQ62).

MM034 has been put forward to ensure that Policy LPC02 is consistent with the paragraph 64 of the Framework.

- 12. Is the zonal approach to the provision of affordable housing within Policy LPC02 positively prepared and justified by proportionate*

¹ Energy performance standard equivalent to former CSH level 4

evidence, including the EVA?

13. In particular:

- a. Is the provision of 30% of affordable homes on greenfield sites in Zones 2 and 3 justified?*
- b. Are the differences between Zones 2 and 3 in relation to brownfield sites justified and clear to the decision maker?*

14. Is Policy LPC02 sufficiently flexible to take into account that circumstances will vary site-by-site (Section 4 refers)?

15. Is there any justification for a rural exceptions site policy for affordable housing (see SHBC001 – PQ63)?

15a. Notwithstanding the transitional arrangements, should the LP address the issue of First Homes and, if so, in what way?²

Issue 5: Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople

Policy LPC03 allocates two sites at Sherdley Road, Thatto Heath for travellers, one as a residential site for 8 pitches and the second as a transit sites for 3 pitches. The residential site seeks to meet needs which have been identified since the preparation of the GTAA and a subsequent permission for 12 pitches. These recent needs are explained as deriving from changes in occupancy of sites and the rise in the number of unauthorised sites (pages 25-26 of SD025 and pages 91-92 of the LP).

16. Is the evidence base supporting the need for 8 residential pitches and 3 transit pitches robust, taking into account factors such as existing provision, household growth, hidden need (those in bricks and mortar housing), unauthorised sites and encampments and any engagement with the traveller community?

17. Should Policy LPC03 be modified so that it sets pitch targets for gypsies and travellers (paragraph 9 of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) refers)?

18. Is the need identified for the next 5 years or for later in the Plan period?

19. Depending on the response to Q18, is the allocated residential site deliverable or developable?

² See Written Ministerial Statement of 24 May 2021 <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2021-05-24/debates/21052448000014/AffordableHomes>

Policy LPC03 includes criteria against which proposals for traveller sites would be assessed. In response to preliminary questions the Council confirmed that it considered that criterion g) relating to access to services was realistic (SHBC01 – PQ64). In addition, a MM was suggested to take into account the need for travelling showpeople to have space for rides etc.

20. Are the criteria within Section 4 of Policy LPC03 fair and consistent with national policy in PPTS?

20a. How should Policy LPC03 be modified to take into account the need for travelling showpeople to have space for rides etc?

Actions arising from the hearing session