

**Meeting between W. Walker (Brooke resident) and Simon Marjoram (Senior Planning Officer) South Norfolk Council.  
12<sup>th</sup> October 2018**

**Question:** What is the 5 year land supply?

**Answer:** It's the supply of 'deliverable' housing over the next 5 years compared to Housing numbers required. Doesn't necessarily have to have planning permission, it can be sites that are allocated in our Local Plan but we have to demonstrate that they are 'deliverable' in that 5yr period.

We have to do a trajectory to estimate what year they will be deliverable in. We do it site by site on sites of 5+ units, we do an assessment every year on how that site will be delivered over the next 5 yrs. Sites of 1-4 units we assume they are deliverable and they will all happen, that's a standard assumption and has not been challenged.

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**Question:** What about large sites of say 100?

**Answer:** Every May/June we go out and look at all the big sites to see what has been completed in the last 6mths, we do it on a 6 monthly basis. We will then contact the most appropriate person on that site, if it has pp we contact the developer, if it is an 'allocated site' we will contact the person that put the site forward, whoever is the most appropriate person promoting that site at the time.

The Government has 'raised the bar' in the last year by saying that sites with detailed pp are considered deliverable, if it only has outline pp or if it's just an allocation we now need a statement from the developer or the land owner to say what they are going to do with it, otherwise you are going to struggle to say the site is deliverable in the next 5yrs.

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**Question:** Do big sites have a 'build rate'?

**Answer:** We work on the assumption of 50 units per developer per year on big sites, that's 35 market units and 15 affordable dwellings per year.

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**Question:** If these big projects are not building quickly enough to add to your 5yr Land supply in a given year, do you just keep giving planning permissions?

**Answer:** Effectively YES, it's a first come first served basis, which is why the NPA over the last 5yrs has not demonstrated a 5yr land supply. We will still turn things down if they are 'inappropriate', we have refused things and won them on appeal where they have been inappropriate.

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**Question:** Even if you could not demonstrate a 5yr land supply?

**Answer:** **Yes, even without demonstrating a 5 year land supply.**

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**Question:** Why does South Norfolk **not** have a 5yr land supply?

**Answer:** The Norwich Policy Area is not just SN it's the fact that we rely on the delivery of Broadland and Norwich as well for the NPA, obviously Brooke is outside that and in the Rural Area and in the Rural Area up until now, **technically we still have a 'Land Supply' in the Rural Area. We still have the JCS, it's still the adopted plan and is still considered 'up to date', against that plan we have 60 odd years supply, so it has not been an issue in the Rural South Norfolk area, it has only been an issue in the NPA.**

The starting point is, we have a supply of 60 odd years under the JCS, we are preparing the new Local Plan and have something called the Strategic Housing Market Assessment done which is referred to as a SHMA, together with 4 other Authorities. That's obviously based on more up to date population figures than the JCS, therefore the Planning Practise Guidance, which is National Guidance, says you should use your up to date Local Plan which is the basis of your Land Supply, however if you get more up to date evidence then you can put that in as a 'material consideration'.

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**Question:** Would you off-set this year's ONS Population statistics against the ones you've already got, if they've gone down?

**Answer:** Basically yes, the SHMA is based on figures from a couple of years ago. We have been looking at a target of 130 houses a year in the Rural SN area, we've been planning for 130 houses a year, the SHMA is now telling us you should be delivering some 300 houses a year and those sites are just not there to deliver that because we haven't been planning for it.

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**Question:** So, that has not been adopted yet so you're still working on the adopted plan from 2011?

**Answer:** Technically we're counting it as 2014, what happened was it was adopted in 2011 but was subject to a legal challenge in 2014.

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**Question:** When is the new version due to be adopted?

**Answer:** **Not until 2021.**

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**Question:** 2021? (Best news I've heard so far!)

**Answer:** Yes. There is a team at County Hall, you will have heard of the Greater Norwich Local Plan, this is going to replace the JCS. It was due to be adopted 2020 but now it looks as if it will be Autumn 2021, that's the adoption target for the new plan.

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**Question:** So that's 300 odd houses per year?

**Answer:** That's under the SHMA.

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**Question:** That's under the new figures, you are still working to the adopted plan so it's 130?

**Answer:** Yes, but using the SHMA you've gone from a 60yrs supply down to below 5yrs.

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**Question:** And that's for Rural South Norfolk?

**Answer:** Yes, we jump from I think 132 per year to over 300. That's why at the moment we haven't got the sites in the supply end of it.

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**Question:** You haven't got the sites because people haven't put them forward?

**Answer:** The 'call for sites' is the call for sites to go into the **new** Local Plan.

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**Question:** How do you 'add' a number to the 5yr supply, you talked about deliverable on larger sites, what about a single site, is it when they get planning permission?

**Answer:** Yes

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**Question:** So when they get planning permission it adds 1 to the 5yr supply?

**Answer:** Yes.

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**Question:** So actually at the moment you are saying that Rural South Norfolk does have a 5 year land supply?

**Answer:** Yes that's the starting point, against the JCS. I'll complicate things further by saying the JCS was adopted in January 2014 so will be 5 years old in January 2019, at which point the Government will say potentially your plan is out of date in terms of housing numbers and then you will have to base your housing supply on the Governments standard methodology which they recently published. The implications of that are that it doesn't have an NPA or a Rural area in it, they are only publishing numbers by District.

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**Question:** So you come to the end of a 'plan' and have to re-assess the figures?

**Answer:** Yes, the Government have gradually shortened the time period of when you have to have new plans in place. At one point you did a plan and it lasted for 15yrs, then before the end of that 15yrs you started a new one. Now they want you to review it every 5yrs to make sure they are constantly up to date and they constantly have a 15yr time horizon. So ideally the JCS would have been replaced by another new local plan in 2019 not 2021. Obviously the Government have slightly moved the goal posts in the meantime and we weren't expecting to need one by 2019.

The Government has now decided for consistency sake that because SHMA's were being done under a sort of guidance that the Government put out but they were being done under different consultants in quite different ways and they were coming up with quite different results and it was causing all sorts of problems at local planning examinations where a consultant would have done a SHMA for a local authority and developers would come in with another consultant that would do a SHMA in a slightly different way and would come up with a different figure and it was just creating a lot of work a local planning level with local planning inspectors trying to decipher which was the best.

We (SN), appointed a consultant who has done a SHMA for us, a developer will, if it is a benefit to them will say you have come up with a SHMA that's too low, how come it's suddenly gone down to this? We've got a consultant who does SHMA's and they've demonstrated that it does this.

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**Question:** It's money isn't it, if the council then has to fight those things and it goes to the planning Inspectorate the council has to spend more money?

**Answer:** Yes and it's costing money for the Government because planning Inspectors are getting held up at local plan examinations with all this technical information.

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**Question:** With the NDR now completed does that now release a lot more development opportunity?

**Answer:** Yes absolutely but that land is in Broadland.

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**Question:** But it does come under the JCS so it could (development) go to Broadland or Norwich?

**Answer:** Yes it could go to either but that's the whole point of doing the GNLP together, you make that decision through the planning process.

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**Question:** You lend and borrow basically?

**Answer:** Yes.

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**Question:** If you are told you have to build houses obviously you build them around urban areas, mostly, because that's where the work is, that's where the infrastructure is?

**Answer:** Yes, and that's something that will have to be taken into account in this application, is Brooke the right place for 148 houses?

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**Question:** What is the criteria for it (a house) coming off the stock list, when it's built, is that when it comes off the 5yr land supply?

**Answer:** When it gets built it will then go onto our completions for the previous year, when we do the calculation we have to look at whether we have under or over- performed in previous years. If we have over performed then obviously our requirement in the next 5yrs goes down. If we've under- performed then our requirement for the next 5yrs will go up.

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**Question:** Things like Barn Conversions, self builds do they all count ?

**Answer:** All count, anything that is a new dwelling.

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**Question:** What is a 'windfall site'?

**Answer:**A windfall site is just anything we haven't planned for.

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**Question:** Can SN re-calculate the 5yr figures at any time?

**Answer:** The Government don't particularly like that approach, they like you to do it on an annual basis.

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**Question:** So every April you figure you have or you haven't got a 5yr supply?

**Answer:** Yes

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**Question:** So to have a 5yr land supply you only have to demonstrate that you've got permissions for 132 houses per year?

**Answer:** Yes, per year for the next 5yrs.

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**Interviewer comment:** That's not a lot, so to think about putting 148 in one small village is absurd.

**Senior Planning Officer response:** As I say that's under the JCS and actually under the JCS we have a land supply so we don't need that site (148) anyway.

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**Question:** So why is our District Councillor telling us we don't have a 5yr?

**Answer:** Well he's saying we don't have one if we measure ourselves against the SHMA which is a 'material consideration' in the planning process.

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**Question:** So who substantiates that assessment?

**Answer:** It is done by professional consultants against a Government methodology, as I also said you will get different consultants who will use slightly different things under their methodology.

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**Question:** Why do you not use that methodology all the time end of story, that's what you use to calculate your 5yr land supply on every application?

**Answer:** Because the Government says "your starting point should be your adopted Local Plan".

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NOTES:

1. Rural South Norfolk only has give permission for 132 houses per year under current policy (JCS).
2. Simon Marjoram confirmed that in the year 1<sup>st</sup>. April 2017 to 1<sup>st</sup>. April 2018 SNC gave permission for development on **72 Green field** sites and **24 Brown field** site. (This is worrying).
3. SNC have over delivered in recent years.
4. The Senior Planning Officersaid that Rural South Norfolk has always been able to demonstrate a 5 year land supply. When asked why did SNC put in a last minute 'URGENT' letter to the Inspectorate with reference to application in 2014 (2014/0474 Mereside 17, Brooke) stating they can now demonstrate a 5 year land supply in the NPA as well as the Rural policy area, which suggests they previously could not.

The planning Officer did not know and suggested it may have been sent by mistake but would look up the detail. The Planning Officer subsequently came back with the following explanation:

**Cont.**

*"the reason the letter was sent in relation to appeals in the Rural Area (including on application 2014/0474 at Brooke) was that some appellants were making an argument that the lack of housing land supply in the Norwich Policy Area (NPA) should still be taken into account in Rural Area decisions, either because the NPA shortfall could be made up in the Rural Area, or because the land supply should be measured on a district-wide basis. Therefore, despite the fact that the Council disagreed with these arguments, it was felt necessary to update the Inspectorate on the NPA position, as it had been raised as part of the appeal.*