

From: John Fuller
Sent: 10 January 2019 14:28
To: Edward Jinks
Subject: Re: Draft agenda

Edward

The Five Year land supply is calculated on an annual basis every year. It is published in the 'Annual Monitoring Report' about this time of year and then has currency for the next 12 months.

That's what normally happens. It is REVISED every year in the light of housing delivery, population shifts, build rates and other metrics.

This year, as a result of changes in national planning policy, the changes in the Government's housing need methodology as well as the publication of new household projections the calculation is taking longer than in previous years. It's a much bigger change in circumstances than usual.

Now, I don't have any more information than anyone else whether or not the five year land supply will be seen to be met locally or not as a result of these national changes. That said, the magnitude of those changes listed above might lead the average person to conclude that the chance of a material change is greater than a simple incremental adjustment that we've seen in recent years.

Remember that it is NOT possible to demonstrate a 5-year supply as it stands today in rural South Norfolk and the ability of the Council to follow the plan is more constrained as a result.

I have always made it clear that the 5-year supply would be one of the most important considerations when determining this application. As the officials grind away at the numbers, they have taken the view that it would not be sensible to hear the application until we get a greater degree of clarification, certainty & confidence in the numbers. That seems sensible to me. And practical too.

Say, for example, the application was heard this month when it is not possible to demonstrate a 5 year land supply on the Dec 2017 calculation. Even IF the Committee accepted that and approved the application, the application does not get legally approved until the point at which it is issued - some weeks later once the legals/s106 and other conditions have been met. If the 5-year circumstances changed in the intervening period _and before the consent was issued_ so that there WAS a 5-year land supply, the application would have to come back to committee again because one of the most material considerations had changed before it could be issued.

That is a waste of everyone's time. And it is reasonably foreseeable that the revised numbers would be published in the period between committee and a typical negotiation period on legals was completed.

We have been caught by this before so there is no special treatment here. It is the standard approach on 5YLS applications: You issue the permission against the policies that are in place _at the point of_ issue. What the Committee does is RESOLVE to issue the consent. The decision of the Committee doesn't in itself result in a consent [assuming they vote to approve]. Of course, it can work the other way but that's more unusual because in the case of refusals, the notice tends to get issued more quickly so the opportunity for circumstances to change is less.

I am told that there should be more clarity on the 5 year supply situation towards the end of Jan/early Feb. And on that basis, the officials have advised me that it is unlikely [but not impossible] that the application will be heard at the end-of-January meeting. I would suggest the strongest likelihood would be February's meeting but that does depend on the publication of the figures and any other information that may come to hand in the meantime.

Finally, for completeness, as a matter of law, whilst the 5YLS is a very weighty consideration, it is not necessarily the over-riding consideration. Other factors come into play too. But everyone who has studied this will appreciate that it is against the 5YLS that the other matters are benchmarked when assessing it in the round. So we need clarity on the matter in order to proceed.

Does that explain it for you?

John

Councillor John Fuller
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