

HOUSING

Matter 2/1

Overall Provision

1. Overall provision is in general conformity with RPG1 and Para 5.19 of PPG11 makes clear that there are few circumstances in which these allocations should be revisited. Nonetheless several participants have suggested that the figures should be revised (upwards or downwards). Is there really any case for doing so in the light of the PPG advice?
2. Many participants have drawn attention to the level of housing commitments in the County and the difficulty which this creates - especially in 2002-2006 - in seeking to meet the allocations set out in Policy H1. How should the Panel address this point?

Assumptions and considerations

1. Some have questioned the treatment of replacement dwellings set out in Para 4.2.13 of the JSP, or suggested that it is unclear. Is the approach satisfactory?
2. It has been suggested that in some Districts the assumptions regarding the reduction in vacancy levels are unrealistic. Is this so?
3. It is argued that in the Northern part of the County the Plan has understated the effect of second homes and holiday homes. Are any adjustments needed to deal with this issue?

The Strategy

1. Some participants question the degree to which the strategy directs growth towards the South East of the County. It is argued amongst other things that additional housing will not assist regeneration; and that development in that quadrant will tend to increase commuting into Tyne and Wear. Is there any substance in these arguments?
2. Particular attention has been drawn to the role of Cramlington; is development there likely to accommodate mainly commuters from Tyneside, and will new housing aid regeneration? The contribution of Cramlington to the high level of greenfield development in Blyth Valley is relevant here (though this issue will be discussed later). Para 4.1.17 and Policy S6 of the JSP describe the role and development of Cramlington. Is this an issue which the Panel should address?
3. It is argued, as a reflection of a) and b) above, that the strategy pays insufficient regard to the needs of rural communities and market towns, especially in Alnwick and Berwick upon Tweed. Is this so?

Affordable/local needs housing

It is commonly stated, especially in relation to Tynedale, Castle Morpeth, Alnwick and Berwick upon Tweed, that such housing development as takes place is required largely for local needs and to provide affordable housing. Notwithstanding that this primarily is a matter for Local Plans, should the Structure Plan consider whether there are mechanisms in place which are capable of ensuring that this happens?

District discussions

In the light of the above, are the allocations in Policy H1 of the Plan acceptable in relation to each District, as follows

Alnwick
Berwick upon Tweed
Blyth Valley
Castle Morpeth
Tynedale
Wansbeck
National Park

No Supplemental questions for Matters 2/2 and 2/3