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Examination of East Northamptonshire Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (DPD).

Hearing Agenda - Matter E

It is not my intention that the examination of policy matters A-K should involve discussion on the merits of individual sites. I am primarily concerned with the justification and approach to areas of policy within the DPD.

Are targets and thresholds set at an appropriate level to address the supply and delivery of new affordable housing?

Under this general question I wish to examine the following issues:

(i) Is the target of providing a minimum of 500 affordable dwellings over the plan period, and the area split, derived from sound and robust evidence and does it take adequate account of the guidance in paragraph 29 in PPS3? How is the annual target derived?

(ii) The change proposed by the Council in Doc5, paragraph 2.8, seeks to update the affordable housing provision target in Policy 19; is the change sound and is it significant enough to require further public consultation? Should the annual target be updated (2007 or 2008 base).

(iii) The policy approach toward providing new affordable housing in the Rural Areas (Policy 19, point 2) seems to rely principally on provision from rural exception sites and windfall development, Given the comments in paragraphs 6.10-14 of the Plan and the national guidance on provision from windfall sites, is the approach taken to providing affordable housing in the Rural Areas sufficiently robust? If not, what would be a more robust approach towards enabling the delivery of affordable houses in the Rural Areas.

(iv) What is the role of paragraph 6.8 and is its context appropriate given that low cost market housing is not regarded as being a form of affordable housing?

(v) In view of the guidance in paragraph 29 in PPS3, is there sufficient evidence to suggest that Policy 20 (as worded) is deliverable or should Policy 20 be revised to have regard to development viability in different instances and parts of the Plan area? [It is not clear why the proviso on deliverability should apply only for the 15-50 dwelling category]

(vi) With regard to the guidance in paragraph 30 of PPS3 and paragraphs 6.12-14 in the Plan, does Policy 21 do enough to ensure the delivery of a Rural Exception site? If not, is it appropriate (and sound) for such a policy to be included in the Plan?