

**Borough of Barrow-in Furness Local Plan Review 1996-2006**

**Issues Paper – Housing**

**September 2003**

## **Introduction**

Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council adopted the 'Barrow-in-Furness Borough Local Plan Review 1996-2006' in August 2001. The Local Plan Review was written to cover the period up to 2006 however following its adoption it was agreed that an ongoing monitoring and review process during the lifetime of the Plan may result in a need for elements of the Plan to be 'altered' before this date.

The Council has determined the housing policies in the Plan should be a priority for review. The reasons for this are twofold: Firstly the Plan was written prior to revised national guidance on housing being produced; and secondly of the existing allocated sites many of them are either underway at the moment or have been completed and it has therefore become apparent that there is a need to identify sites where future new housing should be directed.

This is the first stage of the review process. A review of the entire chapter does not necessarily mean that all the policies relating to housing matters will change. This paper highlights some of the areas where changes may happen to the policies in the Plan.

The Local Plan itself does not stand alone in directing development and establishing policies within the Borough. It is one of a hierarchy of plans and guidance notes prepared by Central Government, the Regional Assembly and the County Council that form the statutory planning framework for determining the type and location of development.

The National Framework for development plans is set to undergo change as a result of the 'Planning and Compulsory Purchase Bill' due to come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 however the revised framework will still require that there is a need to have an up to date development plan for the local area to guide development and use of land and

provide guidance on Local Development Issues. 'Alterations' to Local Plans are therefore essential to this process.

To ensure that Local Issues are taken into consideration this is the first stage of a consultative process whereby you have the opportunity to be involved in the review. Feedback is important so the Council can make the right changes to the right policies.

The details that follow are the main elements of the housing chapter where it is envisaged change will take place. Each topic has a number of questions to which we would welcome your response, if there are other issues you think should be considered please let us know.

### **Housing**

How much new housing development, what type and where it should go will always be a controversial subject, the review of the housing chapter of the Local Plan will have to deal with these issues for the Borough. The purpose of this paper is therefore to raise many of the questions that will determine where new housing development will go.

The hierarchy of plans including the Regional Planning Guidance and the County Structure Plan set the parameters within which patterns of development are determined.

The North West Regional Planning guidance was published in May 2003 and this set the development rates for each county within the Region. The Structure Plan must disaggregate this requirement throughout each district in the County and Cumbria County Council and the Lake District National Park Authority have therefore undertaken a revision of the existing Structure Plan, a draft version of which was placed on deposit earlier this year.

### **What does this mean for the Borough?**

The adopted Structure Plan for the area, the Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan allocated about 2500 new homes for the Borough during the period 1991-2006.

The table below (table 1) outlines the current position with regard to this requirement:-

**Table 1**

<b>Units Required 1991-2006</b>	<b>Completions 01.04.91-31.03.03</b>	<b>Residual Requirement</b>	<b>Sites with Planning Permission</b>	<b>Windfall</b>	<b>Total Units Required</b>
<b>2500</b>	<b>1754</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>-96</b>

In essence the current Local Plan conforms to the Structure Plan requirements, in fact based on the current figures there is a surplus of 96 units up to the end of the Plan period. However, this is based on a number of assumptions, firstly that all sites that currently have planning permission will be developed and, secondly, that a 40% windfall figure will be achieved. On this basis it is important to apply a degree of flexibility to the future housing land allocations in the short term but also given the current figures will only provide a housing land supply up to 2007 that longer term consideration of housing land is addressed in this review.

The published version of the Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) promotes a reduction in the rate of the development for the North West as a whole and this has been interpreted through the County Council and Lake District National Planning Board's revised Structure Plan recently placed on deposit. The published RPG calculates housing figures based on an annualised completion rate whereby existing commitments and planning permissions are taken into account. The deposit version of the Structure Plan however advocates a different method of calculating future housing provision based on build rates that would not take into account existing sites with planning permission. Should this become adopted policy it will have an impact on how housing figures for the Borough are calculated and it will be important to bear this mind when undertaking this review. It will also be necessary to 'phase' the release of land for housing in accordance with national policy which will enable the

figures to meet either possible scenario which will result from the Structure Plan review. Cumbria County Council have objected to the RPG and this will be subject to further discussion, and possibly, public examination. This housing review has adopted the housing allocation policy of the existing Cumbria Structure Plan.

## **The Issues**

### **The Location of New Housing**

Within the RPG Barrow has been identified as a 'key' town within the North West it will therefore be a focus of development and regeneration with a more constrained approach in other areas of the County. This has been reiterated through Structure Plan policy in the deposit Plan.

Government guidance seeks to achieve sustainable locations for new housing, encouraging 'mixed use' developments and balanced communities. It is proposed to achieve this through a sequential and phased release of land for new housing developments. For the Borough this means that urban locations within Barrow and Dalton will be the focus for new development.

Within the existing housing land allocations there are a number that have been allocated for some time but remain undeveloped. A close examination as to why this is the case must be carried out in order to assess their suitability in terms of current policy. Including sites that are unlikely to come forward for development may prejudice the ability to develop other sites if a phasing approach is adopted.

- 1. Are there any sites within the Borough that you think would be suitable for new housing that are not being developed at the moment?*
- 2. Of the existing sites in the plan that remain undeveloped, do you think any of them are unsuitable for housing and should be deleted from the Plan?*

3. *Is there a need for a particular type of housing that is not being built at the moment?*
4. *Government advice favours development of brownfield land for housing development, with greenfield land only being developed where there are no brownfield alternatives available. What are the implications of applying this policy in the Borough?*

### Brownfield/Greenfield

National targets set by the Government seek to achieve 60% of new housing on previously developed land by 2008. The target for the County is at least 50% as stipulated in the Regional Planning Guidance. As a Borough current completion rates achieve almost 80% on Brownfield Sites. Focusing new development within Barrow and Dalton will hopefully maintain if not increase this percentage in the future.

5. *Should the Local Plan include a policy phasing the use of brownfield sites before any Greenfield sites are released?*

### Reallocating Employment and Other Land to Housing

The Government is now advocating that Local Authorities consider land allocated for other uses such as employment for possible future housing especially where such land cannot be realistically taken up in the quantities envisaged over the lifetime of the Plan.

6. *Are there any sites within the Borough currently allocated for other purposes that you think would be appropriate for future housing?*

### Rural Housing

There is a general presumption against development in the open countryside. The villages within the Borough have ‘residential development cordons’ around them preventing development outside of the main settlements. This review needs to assess whether the cordon boundaries are still appropriate and if any changes need to be made to them. The review must also consider the needs of local communities and whether there is a need for ‘exception’ sites to be identified to allow affordable or special need housing developments in certain locations.

7. *Are there any areas where housing opportunities for local people could be improved?*
8. *Are there any sites that should be considered as ‘exception’ sites where affordable or special needs housing would be appropriate?*

### Density

National guidance advocates making the best use of land and seeks to do so by the imposition of minimum density requirements avoiding developments of less than 30 dwellings per hectare.

9. *Do you think the imposition of a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare is appropriate for housing sites in the Borough?*

### Designing for Quality

National guidance advocates good design and layout in terms of new housing developments. This helps to ensure that the best use of land is achieved but also ensures new designs take into account public health, crime prevention and community safety considerations. The promotion of energy efficient design incorporated into new developments is also advocated.

10. *Should the Local Plan have policies requiring developments to utilise energy efficient design and the use of recycled materials and renewable energy technology?*

### Car Parking Levels

Government Guidance seeks to reduce the amount of car parking on new housing development sites to 1.5 spaces per dwelling. This review must consider the implications of this.

*11. What would be the implications of this policy in the Borough?*

### House Extensions

Many people often opt to extend their homes rather than move. The existing Local Plan contains a number of policies relating to householder development.

*12. Are extensions being built that fit in with the scale and character of existing housing areas?*

*13. Is there a need for any new policies to address issues with regard to householder developments that are not already covered with current policies.*

Please comment on any of the issues raised in this paper or any other issues you think should be addressed on the attached response form by 10<sup>th</sup> October 2003. Should you require any further information or wish to discuss any of the issues raised in more detail please contact Claire Savage on 01229 894249 or alternatively email [csavage@barrowbc.gov.uk](mailto:csavage@barrowbc.gov.uk).

**Local Plan Review Issues Paper – Response Form**

Name:.....

Company Name:.....

(IF APPLICABLE)

Address:.....

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Telephone Number and/or Email Address:.....

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Topic	
Question Number	Comments

Topic	
Question Number	Comments

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To make additional comments, please photocopy this form or continue on a separate sheet of paper.