

## Impact of Policy on Previous Rates of Development

- 5.9 The Local Plan 1996-2006, included a housing requirement derived from the Structure Plan (policy 30) which stated that the borough needed " *about 2500 dwellings*" between 1991 and 2006. It allocated both brownfield and greenfield sites (16 in total, 1092 dwellings).
- 5.10 Regional Planning Guidance was introduced in 2003 which became the Regional Strategy in 2004. It stated that local planning authorities should minimise the take up of additional greenfield land for development to encourage more sustainable patterns of growth.
- 5.11 The Cumbria Joint Structure Plan was introduced in 2004 and directed development to sites within the urban centres. It stated that the Borough should build 1500 dwellings between 2002 and 2016, which was lower than the previous period's target. The Structure Plan has since been revoked alongside the RS.
- 5.12 In June 2006 the Local Plan Housing Chapter Alteration was adopted which continued the theme of directing housing to urban areas and villages with development cordons. It also de allocated a number of housing sites stating that:
- " many of them are unlikely to come forward for development and even if they did their 'greenfield' status makes them inappropriate opportunities because of national planning guidance."*
- 5.13 Only 5 sites were allocated in the HCA all of which were brownfield, these were to provide 707 dwellings over the plan period.
- 5.14 It can be seen that, from 1996 until the introduction of the NPPF, regional and local planning policy was one of restriction rather than growth, unlike the current national guidance which aims to " *significantly boost the supply of housing*". However one of the key questions is whether more housing would have been built if this was not the case.
- 5.15 Table 12 shows how many planning permissions for housing have been refused and approved since the former RS was introduced in 2003 (excluding those where a resubmitted application as subsequently approved). It must be noted however that the restrictive policies in place may have dissuaded people from applying for planning permission for housing in the first place so this table is only indicative.
- 5.16 The figures in the table are approximate as the number of dwellings is not always stated on an outline application and some applications may be counted twice where they have been refused and subsequently resubmitted. The table however shows that the numbers of dwellings refused have been

low compared to the number approved and many of these will have been refused on issues such as design, rather than the principle of development.

**Table 12: Number of Dwellings Refused and Approved in Barrow Borough (2003-2014)**

Year	No of applications for housing refused	No of dwellings refused (approximate)	No. of dwellings approved
2003	14	73	84
2004	10	60	164
2005	10	30	103
2006	16	15+	90
2007	3	17	167
2008	7	14	140
2009	3	7	81
2010	7	6	28
2011	1	3	104
2012	2	4	97
2013	2	2	77
2014	3	40	39

Source: BBC Monitoring

- 5.16 Table 12 supports Table 11 in suggesting that whilst local and regional planning policy has been restrictive over this period, it is likely that a lack of demand or a lack of construction capacity, rather than policy, have been the main factors responsible for relatively low numbers of completions historically.

## Empty Homes

- 5.17 The NPPF, paragraph 51, states that:

*"Local planning authorities should identify and bring back into residential use empty housing and buildings in line with local housing and empty homes strategies...".*

- 5.18 Bringing long term empty homes back into use can help meet some of the identified housing need. This was highlighted at the examination into County Durham's Local Plan where the Inspector noted in paragraph 46 of his Interim Views Report that:

*"There are factors that will push the residual figure lower. No allowance has been made for bringing empty homes back into use, notwithstanding it being a stated priority for the Council."*

- 5.19 The Council has been allocated £3.4 million from the Clusters of Empty Homes Fund to bring empty properties back into use. This fund was set up to deal with neighbourhoods where more than 10% of properties are empty and where at least 100 homes can be brought back into use. Barrow Island was selected as the only area in Barrow that met that criteria and a successful bid