

# SWOT Assessment of Wealden 5YLS

## Summary

1. Wealden District Council (the council) published a document in July 2016 detailing their land supply position at 31 March 2016. This calculation indicated a 3.96 year supply of land, well below the five years required for the local plan to be considered up to date.
2. SWOT believes that the council has taken an unduly pessimistic view of their land supply position. Given the importance of retaining control of development in the district, SWOT consider that the council could, and should take a more balanced approach to the 5YLS calculation.
3. Detailed below is a revised 5YLS calculation. This is based upon:
  - Eliminating the 549 unit backlog using the Liverpool method
  - Including the additional 101 units granted permission on 31 March 2016 in the supply
  - Including an allowance of 600 units from future windfalls
4. The revised calculation indicates that the council can demonstrate a 5.28 year land supply position resulting in the 2013 Core Strategy Local Plan being considered in date.

## Wealden's 3.96 year Assessment

5. In its calculation, the council has used the 735 dwellings/year derived within the December 2015 SHMA as the OAN. However, this OAN is untested. SWOT believe the SHMA over-estimates the housing need and has brought to the council's attention several errors within the document.
6. The council has backdated the new local plan to 2013 and because the new OAN is a considerable increase on the 450 dwellings/year in the 2013 Core Strategy Local Plan, the effect of this backdating is to create an immediate backlog of 549 dwellings.
7. The council has then sought to eliminate this backlog over the next five years (the Sedgfield method) which then requires the five year housing supply to be increase by this 549 dwelling "backlog".

8. In their assessment of the number of dwellings to be built in the period 31 March 2016 – 31 March 2021, the council has not taken into account the many windfall dwellings likely to be built. They have included all the dwellings currently granted permission on small sites and made an assessment of the build out rates on the larger strategic sites. Thus windfalls that have been granted permission are included, but not future windfalls.

9. The NPPF at paragraph 48, expressly permits an allowance for windfall sites in the five year supply if local planning authorities:

*have compelling evidence that such sites have consistently become available in the local area and will continue to provide a reliable source of supply.*

10. Paragraph 5.3 in the council's December 2015 Annual Monitoring Report 2014 – 2015 states:

*There continue to be high levels of completions on windfall sites, and of the 576 total completions in 2014/15, 205 of these were on windfall sites. The average number of windfalls per annum over the last 10 years is 247.*

11. Whilst at paragraph 5.4 it is stated:

*The figures [that is, the housing projections] do not include a projection for windfall development despite the fact that there is compelling evidence that windfall sites will continue to provide a reliable source of supply.*

12. Thus, in December 2015 the council confirmed that windfall sites continued to provide a high level of completions which had averaged 247 over the last 10 years. They also confirmed that they had compelling evidence that windfalls will continue to provide a reliable source of supply.

13. It is therefore considered that the council's decision to not include any future windfalls in its 5YLS is both perverse and contrary to the NPPF.

## **Alternative 5YLS Assessment**

### **Housing requirement**

14. By eliminating the 549 unit backlog using the Liverpool method, this necessitates  $549/21 = 26$  units to be added to the requirement for each remaining year of the new plan.

Five years of backlog	26 x 5years	130
5 Years OAN	735 x 5 years =	3,675
Add 5% buffer	3,675 x 1.05	3,859
5 year requirement		<b>3,989 units</b>

## Housing Supply

15. The supply figures contained within the council's 31 March 2016 5YLS document do not include any allowance for the large new allocations expected to be within the new local plan. Indeed, one application for 395 units has been already submitted, whilst a scoping statement has been requested for a further site for 225 units. Both these sites are in the south of the district, at Polegate and Stone Cross and both may well have some completions before 31 March 2021.

16. The figures within the supply side in the council's 5YLS document have not been checked but are used below in this analysis. There is however one change. In the table detailing the large sites housing, the council has included under Site G, Land at Uplands Farm, Stone Cross, the 82 units consented in 2013. However, the council has ignored the 31 March 2016 decision to grant permission for 183 units on this site. The additional 101 units have been added to the council's housing land supply figures in the line below.

17. Large sites phasing	1,975 + 101	2,075
Deliverable sites with planning consent at 31 March 2016		1,534
Total		<b>3,609 units</b>

18. Thus, without including any future windfalls or any units from the new local plan, the council would be 380 units short of achieving a 5YLS

## Future Windfalls

19. In the four month period 1 April 2016 – 31 July 2016, the council granted permission for a minimum 210 windfalls. It is anticipated that at least 95% of these windfalls i.e. 200 No. will be built before 31 March 2021.

20. Given the council's record of building windfalls has averaged over 200/year since 2000 and 247/year since 2005, a highly conservative position would be to forecast that a minimum of 600 windfalls will be constructed in the five year period to 31 March 2021.

21. Paragraph 48 of the NPPF permits future windfalls to be included within the 5YLS calculation.

## Revised 5YLS Calculation

22. Thus, if the 600 windfalls are added to the 3,609 units derived in paragraph 16 above, then the housing supply figure becomes 4,209 units. With a housing requirement of 3,989 units, this supply represents **5.28 years** of land.

23. In being able to demonstrate 5YLS position, the council's local plan remains up to date and the restrictive housing policies contained therein remain to protect the Wealden countryside from inappropriate development.