

11 April 2017

Dear Sir,

Re: Neighbourhood Plan Housing Land Site Allocations

The Suffolk Preservation Society (SPS) is the only countywide amenity society that works to protect and promote the special qualities of Suffolk. We work closely with local councils, amenity societies and community groups and engage in the planning system to safeguard both the natural and built heritage of our county.

We are writing to you as your group is currently in the process of preparing your community's Neighbourhood Plan. We would like to highlight an important issue regarding the allocation of sites for housing within Neighbourhood Plans.

You may be aware that if a district authority cannot demonstrate that at least a 5 year supply of housing land then any policy within its local plan that restricts housing, such as those that protect locally valued open spaces and views, will be considered out-of-date and the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) applies. Currently Babergh District, Mid Suffolk District and latterly Suffolk Coastal District Councils have all found themselves in this position

A recent Ministerial Statement in December 2016 set out the government's aim to support Neighbourhood Planning groups within district authorities where a 5 year supply of housing land is not in place. The statement announced that where there is an adopted Neighbourhood Plan in place its policies will still be valid providing the district has identified at least a 3 year supply of housing land and also (crucially) that the Neighbourhood Plan allocates land for housing. Read the full statement at <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-12-12/HCWS346/>

In the light of this shift in the government's position the SPS has noted the following recent planning appeal decisions for proposals in Marden, Herefordshire and Marton, Cheshire East, which confirm the importance of having a policy within a Neighbourhood Plan which allocates sites for housing:

<file:///C:/Users/PC5/Downloads/3163453%20Final%20Decision.pdf>

<file:///C:/Users/PC5/Downloads/17-04-03%20DL%20+IR%20School%20Lane%203138078.pdf>

It is apparent that when resisting development on less appropriate sites, Neighbourhood Plans that do not make specific site allocations for housing are not subject to the latest Ministerial ruling (which requires only a 3 year housing land supply) but rather the 5 year housing land supply which is set out in the NPPF.

Your draft plan may already allocate sites for housing, however if this is not the case then we recommend that you consult with your Neighbourhood Planning advisor on this matter. These recent changes and appeal decisions may have significant implications for the effectiveness of Neighbourhood plans. It is important to consider this to safeguard your plan's policies and maximise the weight given to your Neighbourhood Plan within the planning process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona Cairns', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Fiona Cairns BA(Hons) DipTP DipBldgCons(RICS) MRTPI IHBC
Director**