

## Appendix 5

### Note of SALA Panel Meeting

#### Stroud District Council Offices 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017

<b>Attending:</b>	Paul Barton	Bruton Knowles
	Suzy Birdseye	Hallam Land Management Ltd
	Jeremy Drew	Newland Homes Limited
	Sarah Hamilton-Foyn	Pegasus Group
	Andrew Watton	Andrew Watton Property Consultants
	Mark Russell	Stroud District Council
	Conrad Moore	Stroud District Council
	Susan Deacon	Stroud District Council
	Helen Johnstone	Stroud District Council
<b>Apologies:</b>	Chris Knibbs	Severn Vale Housing

#### **1. Introduction:**

- 1.1. Invitations were sent out to a range of representatives from the development and property industry to form a small panel, to discuss the deliverability and developability of potential sites included in the Strategic Assessment of Land Availability (SALA), for housing, economic and community development, within Stroud District.
- 1.2. Panel members were sent a sample of assessed sites, prior to the panel meeting, as an indication of the range of sites and type of development included in the SALA.
- 1.3. A meeting of the SALA Panel was held to discuss the Council's general approach to deliverability, as demonstrated by the sample sites, and to gain a wider understanding of the current general market position regarding likely developability and future demand across the District.
- 1.4. A summary of the main discussion points is set out below:

#### **2. The wider market context:**

- 2.1. The Panel considered the market position over the next 18 months to be generally robust across the development spectrum, from individual plots upwards to larger development schemes, evidenced by the current healthy competition for land.
- 2.2. Smaller schemes and development within certain settlements across the District were considered by the Panel to offer more attractive development prospects than larger strategic developments involving competition between multiple providers competing against each other.
- 2.3. Within Stroud District, the Panel considered that growth tended to balance out across the area over time. Berkeley was considered to be a potential growth area due to its proximity to Thornbury and the wider north Bristol area and the likely boost to the local area from the Berkeley Green Science and Technology College. Kings Stanley and Leonard Stanley were identified by the Panel as attractive to the development industry due to their location outside the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as well as their attractiveness to the market due to their accessibility to services and facilities. With Painswick as an example, the Panel discussed the necessary role of development in maintaining the viability of

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existing services and facilities, together with the need to bring forward suitable sites as early as possible. The Panel also identified the influence future infrastructure provision and development of strategic sites will have on the accessibility, future market attractiveness and development potential of some of the sample sites. With regard to the Gloucester Fringe, the Panel considered that development in the Brockworth area, straddling Gloucester City and Stroud District boundaries, should seek to provide a coherent identity to existing settlement areas through strong landscaped enclosure and buffers.

### **3. The SALA approach to classifying sites as Deliverable or with Future Potential for the uses identified:**

- 3.1. The Panel agreed with the SALA's assessment of sample sites considered deliverable or identified as having future potential.
- 3.2. The development industry would encourage the SALA to take a broader view towards development and would like to see the classification of all sites identified as suitable through the SALA process, as deliverable even when they are not strictly policy compliant. This would help to provide certainty for developers and bring forward development timescales (see also 6.2 below).

### **4. The SALA approach to Development Potential:**

#### **1. Net site area/ net developable area**

- a) The Panel considered that the net developable area calculations used in the site assessments were arbitrarily higher than the general development industry ratio of 60% developed site area: 40% undeveloped site area, allowing for general infrastructure, green infrastructure, play areas and other open space provision. Examples were given of other local authorities using a 60%:40% ratio of developed site area to undeveloped site area.
- b) The SALA's approach to identifying the developable area of each site, excluding constrained areas, before applying a net developable area calculation was outlined as an explanation to why the net developable area figures appear higher than industry standards. Examples of a range of schemes demonstrating developed: undeveloped site area ratios were welcomed.
- c) For sites up to 1ha in site area, a 10% reduction in developable area was identified as more realistic than the 5% applied in the sample site assessments.

#### **2. Density**

- a) The Panel expressed concern that the suggested density of development on some sites, particularly within urban areas, may be un-ambitious. However it was generally accepted that the density of development on small sites would be guided by the prevailing density of the surrounding area.
- b) The use of minimum standards by some local authorities, as a means of influencing density, was criticised as overly restrictive and not beneficial to market choice.

#### **3. Suggested types of housing/ employment uses**

- a) The Panel generally agreed with the SALA's assessment of the suggested types of housing/ employment uses on the sample sites.

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- b) The Panel discussed preconceptions of bungalow development as land hungry and costly. It was generally acknowledged that new bungalow development has a role to play in the housing market in terms of releasing existing housing stock, providing for lifetime communities and may be an appropriate design solution on sensitive sites. It was also considered that the market will, in general, respond to demand, providing bungalows where required although there may be a slight lag between demand and provision. Examples of recent development schemes including bungalow plots were discussed together with their market attractiveness. A planning policy response was not considered necessary or desirable.
- c) A demand for affordable commercial floor space, similar to affordable housing provision, particularly for start up businesses, was identified by the Panel.

### 5. The SALA approach to Viability:

- 5.1. The Panel accepted the SALA's general approach to viability, having regard to the latest CIL Viability Update and the viability of a range of site typologies.
- 5.2. The viability of individual sites was recognised as difficult to assess, particularly on brownfield or constrained sites and sites involving the conversion of existing buildings, and in the absence of a detailed scheme.
- 5.3. The Panel identified a trend in the local market for commercial development providing higher returns, and therefore better viability prospects, than housing on brownfield sites, contrary to the wider national picture. This was attributed to a shortage of suitable brownfield sites.

### 6. The SALA approach to Yield:

- 6.1. The Panel identified the need to adjust the yield by year analysis, with Years 1 – 5 to commence 2017/18.
- 6.2. The Panel drew attention to the lead time for developments, from planning application through to delivery, and the impact on year by year yield. This is exacerbated in the case of sites which are assessed as 'suitable' in the SALA but which are not strictly policy compliant, and are therefore not identified as being deliverable. Identifying these sites as having 'Future Potential' for development, rather than 'Deliverable' was considered to significantly increase lead times and may even deter applications coming forward because of a lack of certainty for the developer.
- 6.3. A number of sites were identified by the Panel as having over optimistic delivery projections, particularly in cases of multiple site ownership, lack of site access or uncertain availability prospects.
- 6.4. The Panel considered that some sites, promoted through the call for sites, had the potential to come forward earlier than the SALA projected delivery timescale.
- 6.5. In the absence of any availability evidence, the Panel queried the SALAs classification of some sites as having a reasonable prospect of coming forward in the future.

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### **7. The SALA site assessment report, content and structure:**

7.1. The Panel accepted the general form, content and structure of the SALA site assessment reports.

24<sup>th</sup> March 2017