

West Somerset District Council Local Plan Examination

Matters and Issues Statement made by Savills on behalf of the Trustees of The Wyndham Estate

Matter 2: Strategic Housing Market Areas and the Objectively Assessed Housing Need

1. **Subject to the caveat set out within it, Framework paragraph 47 requires the objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area to be met in full. The West Somerset local planning authority area is smaller than the administrative area of the District and appears to comprise more than one HMA. Has the Council met the requirement of Framework paragraph 47 in addressing the needs of the HMA and if not, in what way(s) has it failed to do so and how can this be corrected?**

1.1. The Wyndham Estate suggests that because the Council has focused on the housing market area for the Northern Peninsula, with a more recent addition to the evidence base that focuses exclusively on West Somerset, it will be difficult for the Council to demonstrate that the objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing are being met in full. The Council's correspondence with the Inspector has sought to justify why the Council has not taken into account the housing market area for Taunton and South Somerset, but given the critical need for affordable housing in West Somerset and the difficulty in meeting that full need the Estate suggests that other options in the parts of the housing market that lie outside of West Somerset should be explored more fully.

1.2. It is understood that the Council originally relied upon 2008 data from Taunton Deane and South Somerset local planning authority areas. A key step in correcting the methodology for assessing and then addressing the needs of the housing market area could be to commission research into whether neighbouring local planning authorities have any capacity to meet the housing needs of West Somerset; particularly affordable housing need. This may conclude that there is no capacity, but updating the evidence base would help the Council to form more robust conclusions.

2. **The most recent information made available by the Council on the OAHN is included within the papers to the Local Development Panel on 25 November 2015. This continues to argue that the 2900 dwellings being planned for is above the OAHN. Is this analysis robust and, if not, in what way is it deficient and what are the implications for the OAHN?**

2.1. The report issued to the Local Development Panel in November 2015 explains (paragraph 5.13) that there have been difficulties in obtaining reliable data for the local need for affordable housing to rent. Data not collected by Homefinder Somerset is not available for the calculations needed to determine the future need for affordable housing to rent.

2.2. The report goes on to explain (paragraphs 5.15 and 5.16) that the review of data sources identified issues where care is advised in the use and interpretation of data. Elements such as inward migration amongst adults and the impact of Hinkley Point C on the housing market are described as 'unpredictable'; there is uncertainty about future data trends and the Council acknowledges that any revision of the OAHN figure is likely to be upward.

2.3. The Council maintains that the Local Plan target of 2,900 dwellings is above the OAHN, but the Estate considers that the Council's analysis of the data that informs the OAHN can only be as robust as the data itself. As such the ability to be consistent with Framework paragraph 47 will be constrained by the uncertainty about the need for market and affordable housing.