

West Somerset District Council Local Plan Examination

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

Matter 3: The Plan Strategy and the Delivery of Affordable Housing

1. The points raised in my initial letter to the Council (ED3) at paragraphs 18 to 35, including the questions in that final paragraph, have not been fully answered by the Council in its subsequent correspondence (ED4, ED8 and the papers to the Local Development Panel on 25 November 2015). Having regard to those questions is the strategy on which the Plan is based the most appropriate of those considered to deliver the required market and affordable housing?

1.1. No comment

2. Is it justified by the evidence base?

2.1. No comment

3. The Housing and Planning Bill will be enacted during the life of the Plan and, perhaps, prior to its adoption. Assuming that the provisions of the Bill and particularly Part 1 remain largely as set out are the policies of the Plan sufficiently flexible to allow the required starter homes and self-build and custom house building to come forward? If not, what changes are required?

3.1. The classification of Starter Homes as a form of affordable housing and the duty on local authorities to promote the supply of Starter Homes could result in fewer homes delivered for what is currently classified as an affordable tenure. There is the potential for fewer homes to be delivered for affordable rent, leaving a gap in housing provision for those on lower incomes. This is considered to be particularly relevant for West Somerset, where the Council recognises that there is a disparity between incomes and houses prices and an acute need for affordable housing. A discount of 20% of market value may not be sufficient for those in West Somerset in housing need to make the jump from traditional affordable housing schemes to Starter Homes.

3.2. The Wyndham Estate encourages the Council to pay close attention to the Housing and Planning Bill and to determine whether the provisions of the Bill that relate to Starter Homes will conflict with the objectives in policy SC4. The Council may wish to consider a separate policy for Starter Homes, or a separate point within policy SC4, that addresses the potential for Starter Homes to replace other types of affordable housing tenure for which there may be a greater requirement.

3.3. The Estate draws the Council's attention to the concerns highlighted in Savills' publication *Policy response: the impact of new housing measures on development* provided in appendix A.

4. Having regard to the Sustainability Appraisal (SD11 to SD15) and the November 2015 Addendum and Appendix (ED??) is the selection of strategic and, especially, early release sites justified by the evidence base and, if not, what should be done by way of correction?

4.1. No comment