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Conference or Workshop Item

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“THE USE OF PUBLIC INTERVENTIONS TO MEET THE FIVE-YEAR LAND SUPPLY REQUIREMENT”

Think-piece for “An examination of Coalition policy for ‘five-year land supplies’”,
University of Northampton / University of Hertfordshire seminar, 30.10.2014

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Contents of presentation.....

- Can public interventions address any ‘viability gap’?
- Discussion points on (1) policies, (2) powers & (3) land
- Delivering *proactive planning* for the Local Plan

Is there a ‘viability gap’?

The UK’s current paradigm for understanding new housing delivery is the ‘private sector developer’

‘Deliverability’ of land driven by ‘viability’ and business models (ERSC ‘South-Midlands’ research, 2012-14)

Potential for impact on the ‘soundness’ of Local Plans, before **and** after adoption

Clear gaps exist between what sites exist and the frameworks that can help them be deliverable.....

Can public interventions address the ‘gap’?

The role of the ‘public sector’ is largely construed to be that of *facilitating* the developers to deliver new stock

Significant debate continues on how to embolden the public sector in line with European counterparts

Lyons Review provides many proactive ideas

What scope for intervention via policy development, use of public powers, or direct use of public land?

Relationship to national policy guidance

Tests to identify five-year supplies - available; suitable; achievable and viable – can suit the public sector

‘Robust’ evidence that sites will be developable within five-year period does not require extant approvals

NPPF ‘presumption’ in favour of site development

“...unless other policies indicate otherwise”..... (para 10)

Delivering a *proactive* Local Plan

What implications for looking at ways of developing a *proactive* Local Plan ? :

- explore issues associated with public sector policies and powers
- consider issues relating to public sector land holdings
- challenge attitudinal approaches to ‘viability’
- tie the development of sites to confirmations on the pace of new delivery

Public sector policies : changing practice

Evidence for claims of ‘non-viability’ to be required in full detail, including terms of agreements and ‘options’

Identify other builders prepared to develop sites still considered ‘non-viable’ by mainstream builders

Encourage new-build housing with lower overheads from across the ‘community-build’ / self-commissioned sector

Public sector policies : community engagements

Evidence of community support for local-scale development to contribute to five-year calculations

Sign-up to larger development if sufficient infrastructure and facilities are in place

The ‘weight’ of Neighbourhood Plans in deliberations on local land supplies – even with no adopted Local Plan

Public sector powers : acquiring sites

ESRC research into ‘sustainable’ development identified sufficient sites, but monopolisation of site ownership

Lyons Review promotes clarity on build-out target dates and deadlines, and stream-lining of ‘CPO’ system

Consider ‘well-being’ powers for compulsory ‘land management orders’ on build-now pay-later basis

Public sector powers : expanding influence

Disposal of land to suppliers signed-up to key principles

Stimulating take-up of competitive business models

Use of public-land to deliver mixed-tenure units and challenge local prices

Public sector land : assessing local holdings...

What figures show local land-holdings *across* the ‘public’ sector [Gov estimates @40% of ‘developable’ land]?

Are SHLAA / five-year land supply conclusions predominantly of *privately*-owned land?

Include maximum degree of ‘public sector’ sites in five-year calculations – Gov policy does not require fine detail

Public sector land : building with ‘other’ viabilities

‘Open market’ lethargy can be grounds for disposing of public sites under different terms

Promoting alternative models of ‘viability’ can expand both housing supply side and breadth of sites

Prioritise infrastructure investment into reclamation of brownfield sites

Concluding remarks

A proactive Local Plan approach to challenge the UK's lack of competitive business models

Promoting a willingness to use public resources as routes of intervention to affect positive market change

Perhaps house-building focus should be on higher rates of development on a smaller number of sites?

Submitted Abstract

This paper considers the extent to which local authorities could use the potential of publicly-owned assets to be a contribution towards meeting the policy requirement to identify suitable land on a rolling ‘5-year’ basis. It pulls together a variety of source material, including recent ESRC-research into ‘sustainable’ housing development in the ‘South-Midlands’ area, new-build housing experience from the ‘community-build’ sector, and experience from local communities working on Neighbourhood Plans to shape the nature of future local developments.

The paper looks at examples of where national and local policy support for the use or disposal of ‘public land’ could be a quantifiable element of the land required to meet the ‘5-year’ requirement, and an argument is put forward that a dynamic use of local public assets can be a core element of meeting new national requirements and be a dynamic response to claims that other proposed housing land might somehow no longer be ‘viable’ for immediate use.

*Thank you
for listening*

Any Questions?

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