

Garden Community Delivery Rates Update

Background

This paper has been produced to inform the regulation 19 Local Plan, in particular the anticipated delivery rates on the Garden Communities.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (paragraph 47) requires local planning authorities to identify sufficient land to ensure that their local plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area. For Uttlesford a significant element of this supply is made up of delivery on the Garden Communities. It is therefore important to ensure the delivery rates for the Garden Communities anticipated in the plan, are robust.

Regulation 18 Local Plan – anticipated delivery rates

The regulation 18 Local Plan that was consulted upon over the summer of 2017 included trajectories for the Garden Communities that delivered dwellings onsite for Easton Park and North Uttlesford from 2021/22, and built up to delivering 175 dwellings per annum. For West of Braintree, the trajectory anticipated delivery from 2025/26 and built up to delivering 150 per annum.

Garden Community	First year with housing completions	Total delivery in the plan period
Easton Park	2021/22	1,800
North Uttlesford	2021/22	1,900
West of Braintree	2025/26	970

Regulation 18 Local Plan - representations

At the regulation 18 consultation the Council received a number of representations critiquing the trajectories at the Garden Communities. These representations criticised the delivery as commencing too early, and did not reflecting the long lead in times that large developments often have. Representations also suggested that the build out rate was fairly conservative, and could build up to a higher rate.

Input from the Garden Community promoters

On 8 November 2017, a visiting Planning Inspector came to Uttlesford District Council to discuss the draft Local Plan and offer advice on how to approach certain issues in the Local Plan. The Inspector suggested that input from the promoters of sites was strong evidence as to when delivery on the site could commence and the likely delivery rates that could be achievable.

Barton Willmore provided Uttlesford District Council with a note setting out their thoughts on build rates. They concluded that the strong housing market in Uttlesford and the size of Easton Park and the ready-made market for affordable housing mean that build rates on the site can achieve around 250-350 dwellings per annum (dpa). See the full note in Appendix 1.

Bidwells provided the Council with a note setting out their thoughts on build rates and lead-in times. They concluded that the time taken to submit and determine planning applications, s106, pre-commencement planning conditions, marketing to housebuilders and implementation of

infrastructure commitments, meant that development would be likely to commence in 2023. They anticipated being able to open three sales outlets and a potential fourth in 2034. This reaches a build out of 292 dpa by 2033 and 333 dpa by 2034. See the full note in Appendix 2.

Development Plan Documents

At regulation 18 consultation the Local Plan left the decision as to format of the document that would guide future development of the Garden Community sites, either a Development Plan Document (DPD) or a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). For the Regulation 19 Local Plan officers are going to be recommending that the work to guide future development on these sites should be through DPDs. DPDs offer increased opportunities for public involvement, through multiple stages of consultation and another examination in public before adoption; and the opportunity for further detail and the ability to set new policy. However, DPDs take longer to produce than SPDs.

Work on the DPD for West of Braintree has already begun, with an issues and options consultation taking place over the winter of 2017/18. Uttlesford District Council plans to start work on the DPDs for Easton Park and North Uttlesford in the summer / autumn 2018, with the possibility of a first stage of consultation in the winter. If work can commence for this timetable then the DPDs have the potential to be adopted in 2020.

Work on the outline planning applications for Easton Park and North Uttlesford is capable of starting in parallel to work on the DPDs, and it is considered that completions of residential properties could commence in 2022/23, building up to around 300 dpa by 2033. See the trajectories for the Garden Communities in Appendix 3.

West of Braintree

The Examination in Public into the Braintree Local Plan is ongoing. The start date for the delivery of homes on the Uttlesford part of the West of Braintree site is 2025/26, a number of years after the date for Easton Park and North Uttlesford. The rate of delivery reaches 150 dpa within Uttlesford, these assumptions are considered robust and reasonable. Furthermore, it is not considered appropriate to amend the trajectory for the cross boundary West of Braintree Garden Community in the middle of Braintree's examination.

Conclusions

Overall, taking into account the representations received at Regulation 18 consultation, and the information from the promoters of Easton Park and North Uttlesford, it is considered appropriate to move the first year that completions are anticipated on these two Garden Communities, from 2021/22 to 2022/23. This will ensure the trajectories are still ambitious but also more robust, and will allow for the development of DPDs to guide the development. It is also considered appropriate to increase the trajectories in later years as the developments will be able to deliver increased numbers of dwellings as multiple outlets open.

The proposed trajectories are included at Appendix 3.

Appendix 1 – Barton Willmore note on delivery rates

8th January 2018

EASTON PARK, UTTLESFORD NEW SETTLEMENT DELIVERY RATE ANALYSIS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This briefing note has been prepared to advise on delivery rates associated with New Settlement proposals, including the delivery aspects of the proposed new Easton Park settlement.

2.0 RESEARCH

- 2.1 The NLP research report “Start to Finish” suggests that delivery rates are influenced by several factors (p.13):
1. The strength of the local housing market. Stronger locations can sustain higher build out rates NLP say. Easton Park is in one of the strongest housing markets in the UK, being within commuting distance to both London and Cambridge and having Stansted airport as a major employer close by.
 2. The number of sales outlets open. NLP say larger schemes enable more choice to consumers, as more house builders can be present at any one point offering different sizes, styles, brands, and price points of dwellings for sale. NLP say large-scale developments have the ability to increase the ‘absorption rate’ (the number of new properties for which buyers can be found), which boosts annual delivery rates. The Easton Park proposal is for 10,000 dwellings and so represents one of the largest potential new settlements in the country. Therefore its ability to have multiple outlets for sales across the site seems to be confirmed by the NLP research.
 3. The NLP research looks at average build out rates and peak build out rates. NLP recognise that the nature of the subject means averages can be misleading, that data is not terribly reliable, and many factors influence individual circumstances.

We agree these are the key factors which influence delivery rates.

- 2.2 The NLP Table 1 on page 16 (reproduced below) provides some information against which to assess the Easton Park assumptions.

Table 1: Peak annual build-out rates compared against average annual delivery rates

Scheme	Peak Annual Build-Out Rate	Annual Average Build-Out Rate
Cambourne	620	239
Hamptons	548	224
Eastern Expansion Area	473	268
Cranbrook	419	321
Broughton	409	171

Source: NLP analysis and various AMRs

- 2.3 Additionally, our own research (not exhaustive) adds to the NLP work as below:

Table 1: Peak annual build-out rates compared against average annual delivery rates

Scheme	Peak Annual Build-Out Rate	Annual Average Build-Out Rate
The Wixam, Beds	496	265
Chafford Hundred, Thurrock	677	205

Source: Barton Willmore

3.1 EASTON PARK

- 3.1 In total, we think an average of around 250- 350 dpa is achievable at Easton Park. Clearly it might be more or less over time, but in our view we do not think that it is an unrealistic general target to seek to achieve, and is consistent with the industry research outlined above.

- 3.2 In our Easton Park Prospectus 2017, we have assumed the lower rate of 250 dpa, to illustrate how, even taking a conservative view on delivery rates, development will proceed. The Prospectus shows that based on this lower rate, in the first 5 years 1,250 units will be built. This breaks down into 750 private dwellings and 500 affordable housing units.

- 3.3 We consider that as there is a ready made market for the affordable element, then delivery is about the ability for an RSL to build, not market conditions. Therefore we consider the affordable delivery of circa 100-140 units per year is realistic. There might be less in the first year or two, and more delivered at the end of the phase, but in total we think this seems realistic.
- 3.4 For the private sector housing the Prospectus assumes that on average circa 150 units will be delivered. In reality we think that the figure will be in the range 150-210 units. Again, the first year or two might see slightly less delivery compared to the end of the phase.
- 3.5 As set out above, we consider that an average of around 250- 350 dpa is both a reasonable assumption and achievable at Easton Park.

Appendix 2 – Bidwells note on delivery rates

DELIVERY RATES

This paper seeks to provide additional clarification on the forecast delivery rates at the North Uttlesford Garden Community (NUGC). It is intended to provide confidence to Uttlesford District Council (UDC) in its emerging Policy SP7 (NUGC) expectation that, of the 5,000 new dwellings to be delivered at NUGC, 1,900 would be delivered by 2033, within the Plan period.

Our current anticipated annual average completion rate of 175 dwellings per annum is a conservative one based on industry standard practice¹ and the following factors:

- Commencement of development in 2023; two years later than the 2021 commencement date anticipated by UDC. Our forecast is based upon a reasonable assessment of the likely lead-in time required to enable first commencement, taking account of the time required to submit and determine the outline planning application and s106, reserved matters and pre-commencement planning conditions, marketing to housebuilders and implementation of infrastructure commitments.

This is commensurate with evidenced and anticipated lead in times on other comparable strategic developments at Northstowe Phase 1², Limebrook Way in Maldon and Dunsfold Park.

- An assumed total of 3 sales outlets, each with an average sales rate of 1 dwelling per week³. Our trajectory assumes the first coming on line in 2023, reaching full capacity by 2025; the second coming on-line by 2026, reaching full capacity by 2027 and the third on line in 2029, reaching full capacity in 2032.

A fourth sales outlet is anticipated to come on line later in the development process; delivering at full capacity by 2034. This does not however fall within the Plan period.

- 40% affordable provision each year, in addition to private market housing delivery per outlet. This is a reasonable expectation and we would anticipate delivery milestones to be tied into any legal agreement for the development.

It would be possible to increase the number of annual average completions to circa 200 in line with UDC's preferred delivery rate for NUGC by increasing the number of sales outlets site-wide to 4 during the Plan period, effectively compressing the delivery timetable during this timeframe. For this to be implementable it would be necessary to tie the phasing and development parcels into the overall development masterplan.

Adopting this approach in pursuit of higher delivery rates during the Plan period remains reasonable and in line with observed and planned delivery rates on commensurate strategic development sites as referenced above.

¹ HCA ATLAS guidance – Notes on build out rates from Strategic Sites (July 2013)

² South Cambridgeshire Annual Monitoring Report, December 2017

³ Once each outlet is operating at full capacity

Appendix 3 – Proposed Garden Community Trajectories

	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	30/31	31/32	32/33
Easton Park												50	75	100	125	150	175	200	250	250	250	300
West of Braintree															50	70	100	150	150	150	150	150
North Uttlesford												50	75	100	125	150	175	200	250	250	250	300

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