

Matter 14: Sustainable Travel, Infrastructure and Delivery and Monitoring

(Policies ST1-ST3 and ID1-ID3)

Issue 14 – Does the Plan set out a positively prepared strategy and policies for sustainable travel, infrastructure, delivery and monitoring which is justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

14.1 Do policies ST1-ST3 provide clear direction as to how a decision maker should react to a development proposal? Would these policies be effective? In particular:

a) In relation to policy ST2 are the requirements in relation to bus access into sites necessary and justified?

b) In relation to criteria 5b) is the requirement to mitigate any detrimental impact reasonable? How should cumulative impacts be taken into account?

c) Are there any omissions in the policies and are they sufficiently flexible?

d) Do the Councils propose any modifications to these policies and the supporting text and if so, are they necessary for soundness?

14.2 Does the Transport Assessment of the Plan (Docs IT06 and IT07) provide a robust and comprehensive assessment of the transport impacts of the development proposed in the Plan? Would the recommended measures within the policy provide effective mitigation for its identified effects?

14.3 a) Do Policies ID1-ID3 provide an effective framework to ensure the delivery of the necessary infrastructure?

1. The HBF considers that Part 2 of Policy ID3 is superfluous. The housebuilding industry is fully aware of the benefits of having their homes connected to super-fast broadband and what their customers will demand. The HBF considers that in seeking to provide broadband and fibre to homes, the Councils should work proactively with telecommunications providers to extend provision and not rely on the development industry to provide such infrastructure.
2. Part R of the building regulations require all new build dwellings to be installed with the gigabit-ready physical infrastructure connections, subject to a cost cap of £2,000 per dwelling. As such, this is something that is already covered outside of the planning system and does not need to be replicated in Policy ID3; especially as the NPPF is clear that such duplication should be avoided (paragraph 16) and that planning application requirements should be kept to the minimum needed to make decisions (paragraph 44).
3. As such, Part 2 of Policy ID3 should be deleted.

b) Are the policies requirements supported by up-to-date evidence? How will the requirements of the policies be kept up to date?

4. The HBF is keen to highlight that a sufficiently robust monitoring scheme should be in place to ensure that the effectiveness of the policies are appropriately measured and updated when needed.
5. The HBF are willing to work alongside the Councils to ensure that this is in place (please see our response to Question 14.4 below).

c) Have the implications of policies ID1 and ID2 in relation to viability been appropriately tested? Are the assumptions in the Local Plan Viability Report (Doc IT05) reasonable and up to date and do they adequately reflect the scale and cost of infrastructure requirements for development in the Borough as set out in the revised Infrastructure Delivery Plan?

6. The Local Plan Viability Report [IT05] acknowledges the policy requirements within policies ID1 and ID2 and seeks to reflect this in the matrix contained in Appendix 2 of the document. The HBF wish to seek assurances that all policy/infrastructure requirements have been included within the document. Our representations at the Regulation 19 stage also highlighted a number of areas where we consider the Local Plan Viability Report has potentially underestimated costs, such as in the area of biodiversity net gain and identified where there are significant costs such as affordable housing and M4(3) requirements (where viability is a key consideration when determining if this optional technical standard is justified).
7. At the same time, the appraisals contained in the report make reference to a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) cost (Tables 6.2 – 6.17). This demonstrates the significant cost of CIL and how this affects the viability of development. Given that the Local Development Scheme (LDS) [CD12] mentions that CIL for Central Lancashire will be reviewed in the future, the HBF seeks clarification on the CIL assumptions used to calculate viability and if any assumptions have been made for how this may change when CIL is reviewed.

d) Are the policies sufficiently flexible? Do they take appropriate account of development in cases where viability is below that which would be policy compliant.

8. The HBF notes that the Local Plan Viability Report shows some significant viability challenges in Section 6 of the document. In particular, the HBF notes that the lower value brownfield typologies, lower value greenfield typologies and the Preston City Centre typologies are not viable; and that the medium value brownfield typologies, the medium value greenfield typologies, the higher value brownfield typologies and the higher value greenfield typologies are either not viable or marginal.
9. This is acknowledged specifically within the report itself by stating '*all typologies within the lower value zones are unviable, along with all typologies assessed within Preston city centre, where high build costs and site constraints present challenges to viability*'.
10. It is therefore important that the Local Plan Viability Report is able to account for all costs as accurately as possible. Whilst Policy ID2 (Part 4) allows for a developer to submit a viability assessment where it considers the developer contributions and planning obligations would make a scheme unviable, this should be the exception rather than the norm. The Councils should be mindful that it is unrealistic to negotiate every site on a one-by-one basis because the base-line aspiration of a policy or combination of policies is set too high, as this will jeopardise future housing

delivery, with affordable housing in particular being the planning obligation that often suffers.

11. The explanatory text to Policy ID2 indicates that developer contributions may be reduced or discounted where this would not make the development unacceptable in planning terms. Where deemed appropriate, it proposes a review and clawback mechanism should be incorporated into legal agreements to ensure that additional contributions are provided over time if viability improves (paragraph 10.13). The HBF also considers that for effectiveness, this should also work the other way around in that if there is a further deterioration in the viability position of a development, that the Councils would be willing to further discuss planning obligations with a view of delivering stalled developments.

e) Are there any omissions from the proposed policies and supporting text?

14.4 In relation to Appendix 2 is the plan sufficiently clear as to how its implementation will be monitored?

12. The HBF does not consider the monitoring to be sufficient and effective. Alongside the current information in Appendix 2, the Councils need to provide details as to how the plan will actually be monitored, and identifies when, why and how actions will be taken to address any issues identified by the Monitoring Framework (eg. what will take place if the Councils can no longer demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land).