# Land at Downlands Farm, Uckfield

## Housing Land Supply and Affordable Housing

Summary Proof of Evidence Prepared by:
Mr Dominick Veasey BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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gleeson land

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# 1. Qualifications, Experience and Declaration

1.1 My name is Dominick Veasey and I am a Chartered Town Planner and member of the Royal Town Planning Institute. I hold a Batchelor of Arts (Honours) in Town Planning and a Diploma in Town and Country Planning from Sheffield Hallam University. I have over 20 years' professional experience as a town planner. I head up the Research and Analytics at Gleeson Land. I appear at this Inquiry on behalf of Gleeson Land to provide housing land supply and affordable housing evidence. The evidence which I have prepared and provide to this appeal is true and I can confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.

# 2. Introduction and Scope of Evidence

2.1 There is common ground between the Appellant and the Council (as set out in the Appellant's Statement of Case and the Housing Land Supply Statement of Common Ground (HLS SOCG)) that Wealden District Council ("the Council") is unable to demonstrate the minimum 5-year housing land supply required by paragraph 74 of the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") – with supply no more than 3.92 years and a shortfall of 1,579 dwellings on the Council's published case.

2.2 Although both parties agree that the extent of the HLS shortfall is significant and that the weight to be attached to the Appeal Scheme attracts significant weight in the planning balance, there remains disagreement between the Appellant and the Council over the extent of the supply shortfall.

2.3 There is also disagreement over the weight to be attached to the shortfall of affordable housing delivery.

# 3. Housing Land Supply

3.1 The Council's case on housing land supply is set out within the Wealden District Council Five Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement at 1st April 2022 (CD7/2) and covers the five year period between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2027.

3.2 The Council's published position, dated December 2022, is that it has 3.92 years supply of deliverable housing land. This resulting in a significant shortfall of 1,579 dwellings. In view of this the Council accepts that it is unable to demonstrate a 5-years supply of deliverable housing sites for the 2022/23 to 2026/27 period.

3.3 Having assessed the housing land supply based upon the requirements set out in the Framework, the PPG and the approach adopted in numerous appeal decisions, I also conclude that the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-years supply of deliverable housing land and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development at paragraph 11(d) of the Framework is triggered.

3.4 However, my assessment of the 5-year housing land supply position differs from the Council's published position primarily due to the application of the definition of what constitutes a deliverable site from the 2021 Framework (and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance definition. The respective housing land supply positions are as follows:

Table DV6.1 Housing Land Supply Positions

| Housing Land Supply Element | Council Position | Appellant Position | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Housing Requirement (2022/23 to 2026/27) | 7,272 | 7,272 | 0 |
| Annual Requirement | 1,454 | 1,454 | 0 |
| Total Housing Supply | 5,693 | 4,788 | -905 |
| Supply in Years | **3.92** | **3.29** | -0.62 |
| Shortfall (Dwellings) | -1,579 | -2,484 | -905 |

3.5 In conclusion on housing land supply matters, I am of the view that the housing land supply shortfall and the weight to be attached to the delivery of housing is **significant**. Indeed, the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan being adopted back in 2013 and now with no firm timetable to bring forward a Local Plan review, there is little prospect of an improving situation within the foreseeable future.

## 4. Affordable Housing

4.1 The Appeal Scheme will provide up to 148 affordable homes, which equates to 35% of the total homes proposed. This fully complies with the Council's adopted affordable housing policy.

4.2 The Council's latest local housing needs evidence (Local Housing Needs Assessment 2021) concludes that there is an annual need for at least 854 affordable homes per annum. The previous Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016 identified an annual need for at least 331 affordable homes.

4.3 There are currently 553 households on Wealden's housing register.

4.4 Over the past 9 monitoring years, the Council has averaged delivery of only 173 affordable homes. A level of affordable housing delivery significantly below the annual needs identified within either the LHNA 2021 or the superseded SHMA 2016.

4.5 The current affordable housing delivery shortfall against the Council's identified need over the 2013 to 2022 period is very substantial at -2,993 affordable homes.

4.6 Using the Sedgefield Method for addressing housing shortfall, over the next five years the Council's housing affordable need is 7,263 homes (2,993 shortfall + 4,270 (854 x 5) current need).

4.7 Although the adopted affordable housing policy seeks 35% affordable housing, the Council's monitoring data shows a track record of achieving 26% affordable housing from total net housing delivery.

4.8 Using the respective housing land supply positions for the next five year period I calculate there is potential to deliver at best between 1,480 (the Council's position) and 1,234 (the Appellants position) affordable homes over the next 5-years. A level of potential future housing delivery significantly lower than the 7,263 affordable homes per annum needed over the same period.

4.9 In conclusion on affordable housing matters, I am of the view that as part of the planning balance, **significant weight** should be attached to the delivery of up to 148 affordable homes. This view was also reached by the Inspector in the recent Land at Old Nursery House, The Street, Framfield appeal decision.