

**Appendix 7**  
**Preston Down Road Planning Statement**  
**25 June 2019**

This statement provides a local planning authority view of the position regarding planning policy and housing land supply in relation to the proposal contained in the report to Council.

The Torbay Local Plan 2012-2030 is a locally sustainable plan for growth which is within environmental limits. The Local Plan identifies land for the delivery of around 8,900 new homes over the plan period of 2012-2030, equating to around 495 homes per year. The overall level of housing and jobs growth, together with the locations of new development, represent a balanced and sustainable approach to growth. This strategy was subject to scrutiny by the community/stakeholders prior to being examined then approved by the Government's Planning Inspectorate. The Local Plan was then adopted by Council in December 2015.

The proposal contained in this report is in relation to the Council's ownership at Preston Down Road which is identified for new development within the Torbay Local Plan.

**Preston Down Road**

This site lies within an area identified in the Local Plan for a potential housing allocation. It is not part of an allocated housing site but does lie within a wider general area of Paignton agreed to be suitable for such growth. As part of the preparation of the Torbay Local Plan, the site was considered as being suitable for development as a result of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). A Sustainability Appraisal, which considered growth in this wider area of Paignton, also considered that the proposal would be consistent with planning for sustainable development. The Torbay Local Plan provides for the site to be considered for allocation as a housing site either within the Paignton Neighbourhood Plan or future site allocation documents, in order to contribute to the required level of growth needed in Paignton.

The Adopted Paignton Neighbourhood Plan does not allocate this site for development, nor indeed any other sites for housing development in Paignton. Notwithstanding this, the findings of the Independent Examiner who assessed the Paignton Neighbourhood Plan are that this does not detract from the housing need required by the Torbay Local Plan – the target for housing in Paignton as set out in the Local Plan remains at 4,285. The Examiner's report finds that the Paignton Neighbourhood Plan cannot be required to make housing allocations and recommends that it meets the basic conditions and that it should proceed to Referendum subject to modifications.

This means that the local planning authority would need to make further allocations for development in order to seek to meet its housing requirement and demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. The local planning authority's approach

would be to allocate further sites for development through the review of the Local Plan in order to meet the shortfall in allocated housing sites created by the absence of a neighbourhood plan or site allocations document which fills this gap. Sites which have been identified for development within the Torbay Local Plan but have not been allocated or given planning permission (such as the site in question at Preston Down Road), will form a starting point for the consideration of new housing allocations which will be made as necessary through the Local Plan review. These allocations will need to be made in order to deliver development for the rest of the plan period through to 2030.

## **Housing land supply and NPPF**

Torbay Council, as Local Planning Authority, is required to set out its position and understanding of its supply of future housing. The NPPF requires that local authorities maintain a supply of specific, deliverable sites sufficient to provide 5 years' worth of housing to meet their housing requirements set out in their Local Plans (para 73 of the NPPF).

The Council can demonstrate less than 5 year's supply of deliverable housing land and therefore applications for new housing in Torbay must be considered against the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development in Paragraph 11 of the NPPF. Under Paragraph 14 of the NPPF, the Paignton Neighbourhood Plan does not contain allocations to meet its identified housing requirement, and is accordingly less likely to be protected from the operation of the Presumption, when residential applications are considered.

The Torbay Local Plan through Policy SS13, provides for a number of ways in which the local planning authority would seek to boost housing supply under this circumstance, including bringing forward sites from later in the plan period, allocating further sites for development, etc.

It is imperative that the local planning authority maintains a 5 year land supply in order to effectively deliver the strategy and policies contained in the Local Plan and (when adopted/made) Neighbourhood Plans. Without a 5 year housing land supply, the local authority is subject to increased risk of development occurring in locations which might not be locally palatable or being of a lower quality than that which might have otherwise been required through local policies.

The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out a national standard methodology for the calculation of housing need. The delivery rate in the adopted Local Plan is 495 dwellings per year. The objectively assessed housing needs for Torbay (taking into account local policy added targets for employment growth) is 615 per year. The need to meet the objectively assessed figure was reduced due to environmental constraints in Torbay, which had to be justified and accepted as part of the Examination of the Torbay Local Plan. Future reviews of the Torbay Local Plan will be subject to their own Examinations and scrutiny. The new household standard methodology sets out a Local Housing Need of around 600 dwellings per year. This is a minimum figure which does not consider economic factors.

In future, looking ahead to reviews of the Torbay Local Plan, it is highly likely due to environmental constraints that the Council will need to work under the duty-to-

cooperate with its neighbouring authorities and ask them to take at least some of its housing requirement. Neighbouring authorities also face pressure for delivering enough suitable housing land and the Council is only likely to be successful in gaining the cooperation of neighbouring authorities if it can show that it is doing all it can to accommodate housing development on suitable and sustainable sites where possible within Torbay.

### **General comments on delivering large housing sites**

The delivery of housing on large sites takes many years and it is therefore important that work to deliver sites that might not be expected to be built out for many years begins many years in advance. This steps in this process (i.e. from start to finish) have been identified in research (NLP, 2016) as:

- The lead in time
- The planning approval period
- The time of the first housing completion
- Annual build rate
- Site completion

The lead in time precedes the submission of a planning application and can involve land assembly, detailed site surveys, technical planning preparation, etc. The planning approval period is the time taken to determine a planning application (in full). There is then a period of time between granting planning permission and the time taken for construction works to achieve the delivery of the first house. From then on there will be an annual build out rate (the number of homes built on site per year). For example, this might be expected to be 40-50 homes a year for a site of between 100-350 homes. This means that large sites can take a number of years to build out in full even once planning permission is granted.

Research indicates that the time taken to begin delivering homes on a site (that can be counted in the Council's annual housing monitor) of between 100-499 dwellings takes on average 4 years from the moment a planning application is submitted. Then, applying a build out rate of 50 homes per year, it would take a 300 home development a further 6 years to be fully delivered (10 years in total). In order to deliver housing on large sites and deliver them within the period up to 2030, preparation leading up to the submission of development proposals must begin many years in advance.