

**GLA issues
overspill warning
to Bedford
Borough Council**

DLP BRIEFING NOTE 156

Prepared by
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March 2014

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Introduction

The Greater London Authority (GLA) have begun contacting surrounding authorities within the South East advising them to take account, in their local plans, of a possible overspill from the capital arising from a potential gap between the housing supply and demand.

The GLA's assistant Director of Planning, Stewart Murray, has written a letter to the planning team at Bedford Borough Council, which has recently consulted on its local plan, on behalf of the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson.

In the letter to Bedford Borough Council, Murray said he is 'addressing the duty to cooperate', a statutory requirement under the Localism Act for planning authorities to continuously engage with neighbours on cross-border issues such as housing.

It is understood to be the first time that the GLA has contacted an authority outside London in this way to alert it to the possibility that the capital may not be able to meet its own housing needs and that there is an expectation from these local authorities outside of London to support its growth.

Within the letter, Murray says, there could be a housing need of between 49,000 to 62,000 a year over the plan period. He further states that the Mayor "will seek to accommodate London's growth within its boundaries", however "there could still be a 'gap' between demand and supply of housing in London."

The letter continues to state that planning authorities in the wider south east, that are influenced by the capital, are strongly advised to take into consideration these uncertainties when addressing objectively assessed needs as maintained in Paragraph 47 of The National Planning Policy Framework.

Murray added that the Mayor of London would encourage Bedford Borough Council "and other relevant local authorities to plan strategically for what may well be growing populations." This reflects the general consensus that Strategic Housing Market Areas boundaries are not fixed and that they are far wider reaching than previously anticipated.

Duty to Co-operate

The need to have regard to the interactions between local authority areas to ensure that objectively assessed development needs are met is a key requirement of the 'Duty to Co-operate' established under Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011. The 'Duty' places a legal responsibility on Local Planning Authorities, County Councils and other Public Bodies to engage constructively, and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of plan preparation where it is affected by cross boundary matters.

This is particularly relevant given the interrelationships within the wider Luton and Milton Keynes housing market area (HMA) which alongside Bedford Borough includes, Aylesbury Vale, Luton, Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes and as suggested in the letter, London must also now be considered.

The recent findings of the Inspector in respect of the Vale of Aylesbury Plan (VAP) following the preliminary EiP Hearings that it would be found unsound, is a clear example of the need for LPA's to fully and demonstrably satisfy not just their own objectively assessed development needs but also the 'Duty', by taking into consideration the overall housing needs within their wider housing market area.

Conclusion

DLP Planning Consultants has considerable knowledge of the national planning system and Bedford Borough Council Development Plan documents. Representations have been made on behalf of clients to the emerging Bedford Development Plan commenting on the future growth areas and housing numbers. As the document progresses there will be further opportunities for DLP Planning Consultants to make representations on your behalf. Senior staff within the Practice would be very happy to explain the emerging strategy and its potential implications for you. If you wish to utilise DLP's considerable planning expertise to represent you for future consultations to maximise your influence on this local planning policy document, please contact me or other senior staff in the office to discuss your interests.

The DLP Strategic Planning Research Unit can also provide services in respect of the following:

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