The implications of the Urban Uplift for Applications and Appeals

Strategic Planning Research Unit

Briefing Note

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The "Urban Uplift" has now been a material consideration in the determination of planning decisions since June 2021. Two early appeal decisions, both in Sheffield (Deepcar PINS 267168 and Loxley PINS 3262600), have provided an indication as to the implications of the uplift and how it should be applied.

The City Council ran the argument that the Urban Uplift, introduced by changes to the NPPG in December 2020, should not be applied at the date 6 months after its introduction as stated in the NPPG (i.e. 16 June 2021), but only at a time when the Council decided to publish its next updated Monitoring Report, as this allowed the timescales to be aligned. Neither Inspector found this argument to be persuasive, stating that there are no provisions to opt-out of avoiding the effect of the uplift from this date.

The Council also sought to argue that the increased number of dwellings could only be delivered in the main urban area and not in other settlements within the City's boundary. Again this was rejected by the Inspectors.

These appeals also confirm that Councils are required to demonstrate that student accommodation will have a positive impact on the supply of market housing, and that such accommodation cannot just be taken into account, with no adequate analysis.

In relation to what this means for the other 20 areas, which are subject to the Urban uplift, this is set out in the Table on the next page.

The application of the urban uplift to the most recently published land supply figures results in the following authorities no longer having a five year supply: Birmingham (3.71), Bristol (3.15), Manchester (4.63), Sheffield (4.02), Bradford (3.07), Newcastle-upon-Tyne (4.31) Stoke-on-Trent (4.61), Southampton (3.25), Plymouth (Joint Planning Area) (2.07), Derby (3.91), Wolverhampton (4.40), and Brighton and Hove (1.55). With the exception of Bristol, which has a 20% buffer, all of the other areas have a 5% buffer.

For 7 authorities, this change would mean that the "tilted balance" is engaged as it was before. For a smaller number of authorities, that change away from a local plan target, would actually result in demonstrating a more than five year land supply.

Of course, this analysis just utilises the Council's most up-to-date published information, and as the recent appeals in Sheffield demonstrate, these can in themselves be subject to substantial discounting, depending upon the approach adopted in the collection of evidence by the Council.

In respect of how Councils are actually responding to the challenge, a number seem to be simply rejecting it as "unrealistic" (Darren Rodwell, Executive Member for Housing and Planning at London Councils and Leader of Barking and Dagenham Council), or that it "fails to account for real world conditions" (Spokesperson for the London Mayor Sadiq Khan).

A Bristol City Council spokesperson referred to both the existing and proposed figures as "greatly exceeding the physical capacity of the City to accommodate them", but went on to state that "we must work across the region to identify appropriate sites to meet housing needs."

Councillor Bob Johnson, Cabinet Member for Transport and Development and incoming Leader of Sheffield City Council, said: "This is a blatant disregard for the people of Sheffield, putting different rules to us and the south of England."

A spokesperson for Leicester City Council said: "It will not be possible to accommodate anything like this scale of development within the City's boundary, whilst meeting local and national policy imperatives."

On a more positive note, Councillor Satvir Kaur, Cabinet Member for Homes and Culture at Southampton City Council, said that the Council supports the new formula "in principle", but that there are "financial and logistical challenges that exist in any major urban city that need considering". She added "We welcome additional government support to make these targets and our housing aspirations a reality".

DLP Planning continue to provide clients with up-to-date

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evidence on the land supply position of Councils across the Country in order to inform promotion strategies and to provide evidence to support housing proposals. Please see the Table below for more information.

CITY	Five year housing Requirement including Urban Uplift	Most recent five year supply figure	Five year land supply with Urban Uplift	Published five year land supply	Date of most recent supply figure
Birmingham	25,352	18,801	3.71	6.28	Mar-21
Liverpool	11,041	17,874	8.09	8.78	Nov-20
Bristol	16,779	10,579	3.15	3.7	Jun-21
Manchester	18,517	17,140	4.63	6.25	Apr-19
Sheffield	15,104	12,131	4.02	5.4	Dec-20
Leeds	19,756	23,689	6.00		Apr-20
Leicester	12,290	16,236	6.61	3.5	Apr-17
Coventry	12,206	25,372	10.39		Dec-17
Bradford	12,075	7421	3.07	2.06	Mar-19
Nottingham	8,143	10008	6.15	11.23	Feb-21
Kingston upon Hull	2,814	3862	6.86	7.74	Sep-18
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	7,345	6330	4.31	8.33	Dec-19
Stoke-on-Trent	3,544	3270	4.61	7.65	2016 projection
Southampton	7,103	4,622	3.25		May-13
Plymouth (Joint Planning Area)	7,964	3305	2.07	6.1	Dec-20
Derby	6,242	4876	3.91	5.45	Apr-21
Reading	4,599	4922	5.35	6.67	Apr-19
Wolverhampton	5,318	4679	4.40		May-21
Brighton and Hove	16,779	5,200	1.55	4.7	Feb-21