

Broxtowe Borough Council –

**Housing Delivery Test
Action Plan**

2020

August 2020

Contents

2019 Housing Delivery Test Results	3
The Housing Delivery Test	3
Purpose, Objectives and Status	4
Review of the past year	5
Housing Delivery Analysis	5
Housing Challenge 1 – Meeting the Housing Requirement.....	5
Housing Challenge 2 – Ensuring the Council has a 5-Year Housing Land Supply...6	
Housing Challenge 3 – Flexibility of Supply/Choice of sites.....	8
Housing Challenge 4 – Maximising Delivery on urban sites.....	9
Housing Challenge 5 – Viability / Housing Market Factors.....	11
Housing Challenge 6 – Political and Community Sensitivity.....	12
Housing Challenge 7 – Covid-19.....	12
Other Actions that the Council is taking to support Housing Delivery.....	13
Management, Implementation and Monitoring arrangements.....	14

2019 Housing Delivery Test results

In February 2020, the Government published the 2019 Housing Delivery Test results for all Local Authorities across England. This set of results noted that Broxtowe Borough Council achieved 87% (901 out of a target of 1040) of its required delivery of homes – a significant 20% increase in delivery since the previous test year. However, a result of 87% means that the Council is still required by the Government to produce this Housing Delivery Action Plan for 2020.

The Housing Delivery Test

The Housing Delivery Test was introduced by Central Government in 2018 for Local Authorities to use when calculating their housing delivery need over a 3-year period. The test will also determine whether targets have been met and also establishes a set of implications on Councils for when targets are not met and these are explained below.

Delivery rate (%)	Penalty
<p><95%</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Action Plan</p> <p>The Council must produce an Action Plan to identify the causes of under-delivery and the necessary actions to address it.</p>
<p><85%</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Buffer</p> <p>As well as producing an Action Plan, the Council must add a 20% buffer of additional deliverable sites for development.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><45%*</p> <p>(*increasing to 75% from November 2020)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Presumption</p> <p>As well as producing an Action Plan and adding a 20% buffer, the Council would also be subject to the presumption.</p> <p>In determining Planning Applications, the Council must apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development, meaning that planning permission should be granted unless the site is</p>

Delivery rate (%)	Penalty
	protected under the NPPF or the adverse impacts demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

As a result of these sanctions, it is crucial that Broxtowe does not under-estimate the importance of achieving housing delivery targets, or indeed, the implications of the penalties which the Government have established, which could as an end result, effectively remove the Council’s ability to refuse some planning applications (or cause the Council to lose more frequently at appeal).

Prior to the introduction of this method, Councils assessed their housing delivery need through a variety of individual and often untested measures, which produced an inconsistent set of results across the UK. By using the new Housing Delivery Test going forward (unless they have evidenced an exceptional and justified reason to do otherwise), will mean that local authorities will be generating standardised data and irregularities will be ironed out, meaning that more accurate and aligned housing requirement figures will be produced nationally.

Assistance on implementing the test has been provided by the Ministry of Communities and Housing which comes in the form of the ‘Housing Delivery Test measurement rulebook’ and the ‘Housing Delivery Test: 2018 Measurement Technical Note’. In the latter of these two documents, the below calculation is given for Local Planning Authorities to apply their figures to, in order to determine their individual housing need and generate delivery percentage.

$$\text{Housing Delivery Test (\%)} = \frac{\text{Total net homes delivered over three-year period}}{\text{Total number of homes required over three-year period}}$$

The total housing requirement for Broxtowe for the three-year period (2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19) as identified by the Government is 1040. This figure is less than the annual targets identified in the Borough’s Part 2 Local Plan for the same years, which is 1150. From this, it can be asserted that having unrealistic requirements is not an issue, rather, it is the actual delivery of dwellings that has been and continues to be the key challenge.

Purpose, Objectives and Status

Broxtowe Borough Council continue to take a positive, proactive and pragmatic approach to the delivery of housing for the area. This Action Plan will identify key

issues and measures which the Council will take in order to boost delivery of housing within the Borough.

In preparing this document, the Council has analysed and included data from the latest available Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) alongside reference to the Site Selection Document (which informs the housing allocations in the Part 2 Local Plan) and the Part 2 Local Plan.

The Council will consider any barriers which may be preventing housing from being built and will set out actions illustrating how the Council can ensure delivery on sites that have no current activity. Any further actions to support delivery will also be considered.

Review of the past year

Before determining any future actions to boost delivery, it is important to evaluate the latest housing delivery data available since the publication of the first Housing Delivery Test Action Plan.

The Council is in the process of undertaking monitoring to establish the number of housing completions for the last financial year. However, completions are likely to fall significantly below the Housing Requirement. Taking into account the Council's current estimates and figures, it is likely that next year the Council will be subject to the sanction of adding a 20% buffer to supply. However, the Council is already considering ways in which the shortfall can be addressed and these will be detailed throughout the rest of this Action Plan.

The Council have continued to implement measures in an attempt to continue to effectively monitor and boost delivery. Furthermore, there have been unprecedented factors, such as the emergence of Covid-19, which have undoubtedly had an impact on housing delivery and these have been outside of the Council's control.

Housing Delivery Analysis

This is the main section of the document and reviews the on-going housing delivery challenges faced by the Council and outlines the steps that the Council has and will take in order to address the challenges.

Housing Challenge 1 - Meeting the Housing Requirement

As established in the Aligned Core Strategy, the housing requirement for Broxtowe is a minimum of 6,150 between the years 2011 and 2028. This is shown in the table below.

	2011-2028	2011-2013	2013-2018	2018-2023	2023- 2028
Broxtowe Borough Council	6,150	200	1,800	2,150	2,000

Between 2011 and 2020 (so far) 1680 dwellings have been completed, leaving an outstanding requirement of a minimum of 4470 dwellings left to be delivered until the end of the plan period. The SHLAA 17/18 demonstrates that 2985 dwellings can be delivered within the existing urban areas of the Borough and therefore, the Council continues to have to look outside of the existing urban areas for land that could accommodate the residual number of dwellings. Therefore, the biggest hindrance to housing delivery within Broxtowe remains to be a lack of available housing sites within the urban areas. However, the adoption of the Part 2 Local Plan, with its allocated sites, will go a significant way towards overcoming this issue through releasing additional sites for development.

Housing Challenge 1 – Meeting the housing Requirement

2019 Action Plan:

The Council identified the challenge of meeting the housing requirement and proposed to tackle this in the 2012-2020 Action Plan by adopting the Part 2 Local Plan. It was noted that the adoption of the Part 2 Local Plan would help to resolve the tightly bound Green Belt boundaries within the Borough and will help to trigger the release of land for development within the Green Belt.

Reference was also given to the housing trajectory within the Part 2 Local Plan which contained a 22% uplift of housing figures from the Aligned Core Strategy requirement demonstrating that Broxtowe takes the issue of housing delivery seriously whilst exercising flexibility in supply to ensure that if anticipated sites do not deliver then the Aligned Core Strategy requirement can still be met.

2020 Action Plan:

Since the publication of last year's Action Plan, the Part 2 Local Plan has been adopted and so the positive impacts of this will soon begin to be seen within the Borough. Planning applications and pre-application submissions have already been submitted for sites allocated with the Part 2 Local Plan and a Masterplan for Toton is being produced to provide additional certainty to developers and secure delivery of housing on the site. Proactive discussions with developers in relation to allocated sites will continue to enable the sites to be brought forward quickly.

The Council will also continue to offer pre-application discussions to support major applications for housing development and look to revisit the SHLAA and conduct a new Call for Sites.

Housing Challenge 2 – Ensuring the Council has a 5-Year Housing Land Supply

In 2012 the NPPF included a significant requirement that all authorities should be able to demonstrate, at any given point, a 5 year supply of sites that are suitable for development immediately (i.e. it should have a constant stream of implementable planning permissions that equate to 5 years' worth of the Borough's requirement). Where a Council doesn't have a 5 year supply then all of its local policies for delivering housing are out-of-date which means that irrespective of what local policies might say, if a site could be considered to be 'sustainable development' by national policy then planning permission should be granted.

2019 Action Plan

Last year's Action Plan detailed that Broxtowe Borough Council has not had an up-to-date 5-Year Housing Land Supply over the last 3 years, and provided the below figures:

- 15/16 = 3.6 years
- 16/17 = 3.7 years
- 17/18 = 3.9 years

This has resulted in a number of planning permissions being granted via appeal where the Borough has refused permission e.g. Hempshill Hall (Application ref: 12/00539/OUT) (Appeal ref: 13/00009/APLPI) and Bramcote Ridge (Application ref: 14/00677/OUT) (Appeal ref: 17/00001/APLIH).

The Council responded to this challenge by taking a robust approach to the issue as well as through the site allocations which are given in the Part 2 Local Plan. Following the adoption of the Local Plan the Council had a five-year housing land supply.

2020 Action Plan

Since the publication of the 2019 Action Plan, the Council's Part 2 Local Plan has been adopted. This will enable the release of these sites and make them available for the development of housing.

Whilst this is a key positive step towards achieving a 5-Year Housing Land Supply for the Council, it is acknowledged that it will take time for the effects of the Plan's adoption to filter through into the delivery of homes. Indeed, the Council cannot take

any shortcuts in relation to the planning processes and procedures which must be gone through in order to obtain more housing completions within the Borough.

Notwithstanding the above, the Council have been in receipt of major outline applications for some of the key strategic sites which are set out in the Part 2 Local Plan. These include sites at Coventry Lane north west of Bramcote (20/00352/OUT) and sites at Shilo Way in Awsworth (20/00056/OUT). A major development has also been granted planning permission for the provision of 132 flats in Beeston (19/00816/REM) which will be situated next to the upcoming cinema.

In addition to this, the Field Farm site in Stapleford (20/00116/FUL) which is for the development of 132 houses, has recently seen properties begin to be delivered and become available on the market.

Based on pre-application discussions, the Council is also optimistic that further applications for other key strategic sites will be received within the next 6 months and in order to assist and encourage housing delivery, the Council will ensure that efficient communication with developers is maintained to facilitate a smooth application process with as few delays as possible.

Housing Challenge 3 – Flexibility of Supply/Choice of Sites

To ensure that the Council meets its housing delivery requirements, there needs to be enough sites available for development and these should also be attractive to a range of different types of house-builders. Therefore, the Council needs to ensure that there is a suitable mix of available sites.

2019 Action Plan

The previous Action Plan referenced the Council's positive, pragmatic and proactive response to the Borough's individual housing challenge and this included increasing flexibility. This was evidenced through the Council's planning for a mix of large and small sites on both greenfield and brownfield land in a mix of geographical locations and sub-markets in order to make the best use of all land typologies whilst also prioritising those capable of generating the most delivery. In addition to this, within the Part 2 Local Plan, the Council allocated an extensive mix of sites throughout the Borough for the provision of housing.

The 2019 Action Plan further noted that the Council does not just rely on large sites for the delivery of housing and acknowledges that smaller sites cumulatively contribute towards the Borough's future delivery results.

The encouragement of custom and self-build development through the maintenance of a register was a further example used to support Broxtowe's ambition for a mix of housing development within the Borough. It was also stated that the Council would promote available sites online (by using an external up-to-date source and database) in order to help match future demand with a source of supply.

2020 Action Plan

The Council maintains its positive and proactive approach to the issue of Housing Delivery and continues to use flexibility in its response to the challenge. The Council also continues to monitor land availability in the Borough and are actively looking for redevelopment opportunities on sites that are owed by the Council. This has resulted in planning applications for developments on former garage and market sites owned by the Council (e.g. dementia friendly bungalows 20/00282/REG3; apartments 20/00257/REG3).

As well as this, the Council will consider the utilisation of public land through Compulsory Purchase Orders and revisit Council policies restricting the use of public land, including the impact of any existing Article 4 Directions. It is hoped that this may help to facilitate the delivery of housing as it will create a more flexible setting.

Furthermore, the Council will continue to closely monitor and maintain a register of those who have expressed an interest in custom and self-build property development. The figures for the register as at August 2020 are given in the table below:

	Part 1	Part 2	Decision Pending
Number of applicants	13	5	3

Housing Challenge 4: Maximising Delivery on urban sites

One of the main challenges in bringing sites forward is reconciling the need to build new homes with the political and community aspirations for an area. This can often be a barrier to delivery and can slow the planning process down.

Delivery within existing urban areas is often more challenging and harder to deliver than sites located outside the urban area, and it was identified that can be as a result of:

- Uncertainties relating to land contamination and required remediation;
- Neighbouring land use issues;
- Constraints of existing infrastructure;
- Often the sites are smaller and therefore have a lower yield / developer return;
- Often most costly to deliver;
- Sale prices are influenced more heavily by neighbouring house prices (i.e. they will often be lower);
- Less attractive to volume house builders;

- Potential additional costs associated with demolition and waste removal.

From this, it can be concluded that sites can be less appealing to the development industry and can take longer to deliver due to viability issues.

2019 Action Plan

Given below are the actions which were put forward in the 2019 Action Plan:

- Early and continuous communication with land owners and developers
- Putting developers directly in touch with house-builders in an effort to unlock stalled sites has sped up development rates
 - Departmental restructure created an Economic Development team to be specifically focussed on securing new housing on previously developed sites
 - Delivery assumptions have already been tested
 - Effective use of Council land such as Beeston Town Centre
 - Workshops in the preliminary stages of the Local Plan which included delivery on urban sites.
 - HMA wide workshops with the development industry with a view to providing consistency of approach and unblocking obstacles to delivery.

In addition to the above, it was noted that the Council offers pre-application advice from an experienced Development Management team and reference to Planning Performance Agreements were also considered as a positive step to encourage housing delivery within the Borough.

2020 Action Plan

Much of the Borough is characterised by low-medium density development. The character of the influences the density of new development. New development in settlements that are characterised by low density development should respect the character and appearance of the area. This can lead to further low density development. However, sensitive design can potentially help to increase densities in traditionally low density areas.

Planning permission has also been granted for some higher density development (132 apartments) within Beeston town centre. This acts as a positive example of a proposal making an efficient use of land and shows that the Council is trying to increase density in urban areas. This approach is supported by paragraph 123 of the NPPF which states that “where there is a shortage of land for meeting identified housing need, it is especially important that planning decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of each site”.

To further maximise delivery on urban sites, Broxtowe will make contact with applicants, agents and developers who have been granted planning permission to ascertain whether there are any barriers preventing the delivery of houses and to identify if there are any steps which the Council can take to help overcome these.

Since the publication of the Borough's last Action Plan, the Council's Planning and Regeneration Manager has actively maintained close contact with the land owners of stagnating sites to try to find out the reasons for this. From this, the Regeneration Manager was then able to advise land owners accordingly, often by signposting to key stakeholders or advising possible routes forward in order to get the site moving and boost delivery.

For several sites within the Borough, basic planning advice was given in terms of the possibility of developing the site with the intention to ensure that any development was able to come forward. This 'hands on' proactive approach was essentially able to kick-start several sites that had previously been stagnated, and has therefore made a positive contribution in assisting the Council's delivery of housing across Broxtowe.

Due to the encouraging results of this method, the Council will continue to sustain this contact and relationships moving forward over the next year. Sites have already been identified from the SHLAA and landowners will be contacted to provide assistance and support where required to try to overcome obstacles to delivery.

Housing Challenge 5: Viability / Housing Market Factors

Within Broxtowe, there are both affluent areas and pockets of deprivation. In weaker housing markets delivery of housing is often harder to achieve. This is because the return for the developer is often lower whilst the cost of building the houses remains the same. In addition, across the Borough, brownfield sites can often be more challenging to deliver due to uncertainties relating to land contamination and infrastructure provision which can mean that their viability credentials are lower.

2019 Action Plan

It was stated that the policies (primarily Policy 15: Housing Size, Mix and Choice) within the Part 2 Local Plan would be key in overcoming this challenge. Policy 15 requires different levels of affordable housing depending on the strength of the housing market area, acknowledging that sites within these areas may be more difficult to bring forward. The sound knowledge of the Planning Officers was also highlighted as being a key asset to understanding the different housing markets and the different local needs of each area.

Viability issues are factored into delivery assumptions which are taken in the SHLAA and this helps to ensure that delivery expectations are realistic.

The key aim identified in last year's Action Plan was to adopt the Part 2 Local Plan.

2020 Action Plan

Since the completion of the previous Action Plan, the Council has created a 'Contributions Officer' position within the Planning department. The Officer is responsible for negotiating S106 contributions with developers, to gather market data

to understand viability issues and identify ways of overcoming these and working with stakeholders to overcome delays which may be associated with the S106 process. These measures will speed up the delivery of major housing developments.

The Council has, and will continue to, build relationships with developers, landowners and agents and will also carry on a dialogue after planning permission is granted. It is also acknowledged that the building of these relationships may help to lead to positive conversations which may enable the Council to work with developers to increase site capacity or potentially subdivide sites and understand delivery rates and viability.

Broxtowe will also take a proactive approach on non-implemented planning permissions by contacting applicants to understand any obstacles which may have prevented sites coming forward

Housing Challenge 6: Political and Community Sensitivity

2019 Action Plan

In order to overcome this barrier, the 2019 Action Plan gave reference to the measures which the Council have taken to build a strong, trusting and transparent relationship with the local community. These included providing workshops and training sessions as well as additional support to new Council Members.

2020 Action Plan

There remains to be a need for continued effective community engagement. Therefore, over the coming year the Council will further build upon and maintain positive relationships with Neighbourhood Forums and Parish Councils and will work to ensure that they are fully informed when preparing their Neighbourhood Plans.

Broxtowe notes the potential for Neighbourhood Plans to contribute towards increased housing supply within Borough. At present only one Neighbourhood Plan has been adopted which is the Nuthall Neighbourhood Plan, although Neighbourhood Forums have also been designated for other areas within the Borough. Indeed, there are groups who have progressed their plans to a stage nearing that of the examination.

Whilst Covid-19 has caused delays to referendums, the Council will continue to support Neighbourhood Forums and Parish Councils that are designated to prepare Neighbourhood Plans and encourage a positive Plan for additional housing. The Planning Policy team will ensure that they are available to provide Neighbourhood Forums and Parish Councils with any guidance and support which they need to move their Plans forward as much as possible during this difficult current situation.

Housing Challenge 7 – Covid-19

The unprecedented emergence of the coronavirus has inflicted numerous challenges upon the Council as a whole including how the Planning department has been able

During this period of such uncertainty, developers understandably may not wish to submit major applications for large development schemes. Whilst this is outside of the Council's control, the Council will strive to alleviate any concerns by maintaining close communication with developers and being on-hand to provide support, guidance and reassurance to alleviate any concerns by showing a commitment to determine major applications in a consistent and timely manner. The Council will also undertake a 'call for sites' in Autumn to identify additional sites which may be suitable for development.

Indeed, in this ever-changing and unpredictable situation, the Council can only continue to work as best as is practically and reasonably possible but will however be pragmatic, offer flexibility when appropriate and will be considerate to extenuating circumstances to ensure that the delivery of homes is affected as little as possible by the virus outbreak.

Other Actions that the Council is taking to support Housing Delivery

The Council is currently reviewing and stream-lining the application process to make it more time efficient. A part of this may be to reduce the use of planning conditions through early and continual engagement with applicants.

Officers within the Policy team have also been working on additional evidence base studies (e.g. Toton Master Plan) to operate alongside the Part 2 Local Plan. In doing this, Broxtowe are also proactively working with other infrastructure providers (such as the County Council) to explore ways of securing housing delivery and provide more certainty and security for developers.

Broxtowe Borough Council, together with our neighbouring authorities, is currently undertaking a review of the Aligned Core Strategy (referred to as the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan) which will consider future housing needs for the area. Consultations have been undertaken on potential areas which may be suitable for growth. An example of this is the Growth Options Study – which Broxtowe is commissioning on behalf of the Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership, which is made up of all the Council's in Greater Nottingham.

As part of the Duty to Cooperate, the Council will work with neighbouring authorities to produce Statements of Common Ground focussing on strategic cross-boundary issues such as housing. The Council has a close working relationship with neighbouring authorities which is demonstrated through the joint working arrangements within the Greater Nottingham Area. This ensures that issues which affect the housing market area are addressed collectively.

The Council will review land ownership and work with external agencies that own land in the Borough to identify any potential opportunities for housing development.

Broxtowe will consider whether it is appropriate to split the Brownfield Land Register into two parts. This would subsequently introduce the permission in principle consent route for sites on Part 2 of the Register.

Management, Implementation and Monitoring arrangements

Broxtowe's effective and consistent monitoring of information and data not only assists the Council in identifying past trends and patterns, but also helps enable us to anticipate and prepare for potential problems and have readily available solutions to overcome these.

The Council monitors housing delivery information through a range of different systems and measures. For example, an Annual Authority Monitoring report is published annually which provides detailed information and gross figures in relation to planning permission for strategic sites as well as completions by dwelling size, type and tenure. The Council conducts sites visits to monitor the progress of developments to ensure that housing delivery information is accurate and up-to-date.

In order to successfully implement the proposals and actions set out within this Plan, employees of Broxtowe Borough Council will exercise a co-operative and coordinated approach and will also ensure that this project is monitored effectively whilst always maintaining up-to-date knowledge of legislation and the Borough's housing delivery position.

The Planning Policy team will be responsible for reviewing this Action Plan annually. This will be conducted following the Government's publication of the Housing Delivery Test results which are due to be released each November. Throughout the reviewing process, the team will consider any potential additions to the Action Plan and whether any amendments are necessary, and will make such adjustments accordingly.

The Council welcomes any suggestions on possible future actions to help support house building within the Broxtowe Borough boundary. You can contact the Planning Policy team by using the following details:

Telephone: 0115 917 7777 (request to be put through to Planning)

Email: Policy@broxtowe.gov.uk

Postal address: Broxtowe Borough Council

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