

Barker Review of Housing Supply:
Officer Comments from the Peak District National Park Authority

Thank you for the invitation to contribute to the review. We do not address all the issues you identify, but would like to make the following points, mainly in relation to your Issues 3 & 4:

Over the past decade, the PDNPA has tried to help meet the local need for houses that are affordable, for those who cannot easily compete on the open market in an area of high demand and inflated house prices.

The Peak District Housing Forum (comprising representatives of the NP Authority, District and County Planning and Housing Authorities, Housing Associations within the Park, the HBF and Government Office for the East Midlands) commissioned a study into the delivery of affordable housing for local need in the Peak District. The study was conducted by Building Design Partnership, and the final report was published in March 1998. One of its conclusions was that whilst the Authority's Structure Plan policies do permit housing to meet needs originating in the Park, it is unlikely that the delivery of housing is actually achieving this.

The Authority has recently developed Supplementary Planning Guidance to clarify matters that have in practice caused some difficulty since adoption of the 1994 Structure Plan and 2001 Local Plan for the National Park. I attach a report to our Plans Advisory Group in March 2003, discussing aspects of affordable housing provision that still present difficulties, including the house price/income formula and the ethics of house price control. I also include the final draft SPG (which was agreed by the Authority's Policy Committee on 18th July)

The NPA concludes that due to rapidly increasing house prices, it is difficult to establish a meaningful relationship between house prices and income given variations in local incomes, build costs and lending policies across the National Park. It is not in our view helpful, in decision making or at appeal, to seek such a formula, other than via TCI indicators.

We are also concerned about the ethical and practical difficulties of expecting the planning system to address this issue. Authority Members have asked that these difficulties should be drawn to the Government's attention. The Government should appreciate the difficulties faced in the provision of affordable housing in an area of high demand with the special characteristics of the NP where cross-subsidy sites are often not appropriate.

We are aware that the Lake District National Park is seeking ability to identify sites for social housing only and look forward with interest to Government's response to this.

Peak District National Park Authority
22 July 2003