

- 77.1 The Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning introduced report BOS/17/36 and explained that the calculation of the Five-year Housing Land Supply was a complex and time-consuming exercise.
- 77.2 Planning permissions granted for developments did not always indicate that building would commence within the timeframe to be included in the calculation for the Five-year Housing Land Supply.
- 77.3 Members queried the role of Councillors in relation to developments in their areas. Officers explained that it was in a response to questions raised during the scoping exercise that they had outlined the possible actions councillors could take. If councillors choose to they could contact developers and liaise about the developments in their communities as long as maintained a professional attitude and worked within their code of conduct to the benefit of their constituency. It was not a recommendation from officers, but it was an option for Members if they felt it was appropriate.
- 77.4 Members raised the concern that the Five-year Land supply was only calculated on an annual basis and would like to receive a regular review of the Five-Year Housing Land Supply to obtain an indication of how the Council was performing throughout the year. They were not expecting a full review but a professional judgement to ensure that the Housing Land Supply was heading in the right direction. This was a sensitive subject in the community and Members felt that a regular review would improve the broader understanding for planning issues in the community.
- 77.5 Officers explained that it was the time it took to accurately validate the data available, and that each development had to be validated individually to provide a robust judgement of deliverable housing. Information had to be gathered from various sources and these were not always up to date. The Council had to rely on this information as developers were not required to supply the council with data on completed housing developments.
- 77.6 Members asked for clarification of which of the two calculations, the Core Strategy calculation of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (page 12-13) and which was used by the Government to set targets for the Council. Officers respond that the Government use the most up to date calculation and in this instance, it was the calculation for SHMA
- 77.7 Questioning continued, and officers was asked to explain the 20% buffer on the Five-year Land Supply, which in effect added another year to the land supply requirement and what the criteria for only having a 5% buffer were. Officer responded that the Council needed to achieve the annual target of 350 completed houses for a minimum of one year for the buffer to be lowered, as it was a question of actual deliverable houses. This was a simplified explanation of what had to be achieved to meet the required targets set by the Government.

- 77.8 Some of the target were likely to change once the new National Planning Policy Framework was published. Currently the policy was undergoing a consultation process, but the understanding was that the target was going to be reset and that some of the backlog would be readjusted but that the annual target for deliverable houses would be increased. Some Members felt that subjective judgment by experienced officers and appropriate risk assessment of the date provided should be sufficient enough to provide a review of the Housing Land Supply on a more frequent basis.
- 77.9 The total planning permission of 2,320 dwellings were queried in relation to the figure for the land supply between 2017 and 2022, which was 1699 dwellings (page 12 -13). Officers explained that the granting of planning permissions was not the same as the availability of the Housing land supply within the five-year period and that the 1699 was the number of houses judged by officers to be deliverable within the five-year period, where as 2,320 was the total number of planning permissions granted. Developments required a great deal of time to be completed and often only part of the larger developments were completed with the five-year period. It was this form of transparency which the Committee was keen to scrutinise.
- 77.10 The Annual Monitoring report contained the total number of planning permission granted but not yet commenced. The difficulty was that developments did not commence once planning permission had been granted but had to undergo various planning requirements to receive full approval. This process could be lengthy process, depending on the requirements and how quickly the developers responded to the planning conditions. Therefore, commencement of actual building could be up to 24 months or longer after the planning permission had been granted.
- 77.11 Clarification was given for the information available for the calculation for the Five-year Housing Land Supply (page 16, point 10.23). Some of the sources released information up to 3 months later and some only released the information annually. It was therefore a challenge and a time-consuming exercise to gather robust data for regular review of the housing supply.
- 77.12 The Chair then allowed a question from Mr Nigel Farr, a member of the public, and he asked for a breakdown of the 2,320 granted planning permissions and the reason for why they were viable or not and if that information was available to the public.
- 77.13 The Assistant Director – Planning for Growth responded that the figure of 1,699 for the Housing Land Supply was published in the Monitoring Report in June 2017 and this was available on the Council's website included an explanation of how this number was achieved.
- 77.14 The Chair ask if it was possible to respond to individual cases outside the Committee and both Mr Farr and the Assistant Director – Planning for Growth agreed to this.

- 77.15 Members discussed the importance of the Local Plan and this would impact on the Five-year Housing Land Supply. The Local plan was currently at the consultation stage and carried some weight in relation to the Five-year Housing Land Supply, as the Local Plan progressed through the consultation and examination stages next year it would increasingly carry more weight with the Five-year Housing Land supply. However, officers advised Members that it was not wise at this early stage of the Local Plan to take it into consideration when decided planning permissions.
- 77.16 Members asked why the Appeal Decision had been included in the papers and officers drew Members attention to the appeal decision page 25, bullet point 12. This was an appeal ruling on an expert judgement exercised by a council and it was felt that the statement highlighted the issues debated at the Committee.
- 77.17 The Cabinet Member for Housing suggested that the report was circulated to all Members as she thought they would find it useful.
- 77.18 She then raised her concerned about Members getting involved with development and though it could lead to challenges for the planning decision made by the council and expressed her concerned. for members getting involved in this process.
- 77.19 The Chair proposed four recommendations to the Committee to enable transparency and indication of the level performance of the Five-year Housing Land Supply.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED: -

- 1.1 That the Five-year Housing Land Supply was formally published yearly unless it was shown that the requirements had been meet earlier.**
- 1.2 That the Five-year Housing Land Supply be reviewed half yearly and a report be provided to the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
- 1.3 That the Five-year Housing Land Supply subjecting and objecting variables be monitored regularly throughout the year**
- 1.4 That the Five-year Housing Land Supply report was recalculated in April/May and be forwarded to the Babergh Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review.**
- 1.5 That Report BOS/17/36 be circulated to all Members.**