

**North
Lincolnshire
Council**

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North Lincolnshire Housing Delivery Test Action Plan

July 2021

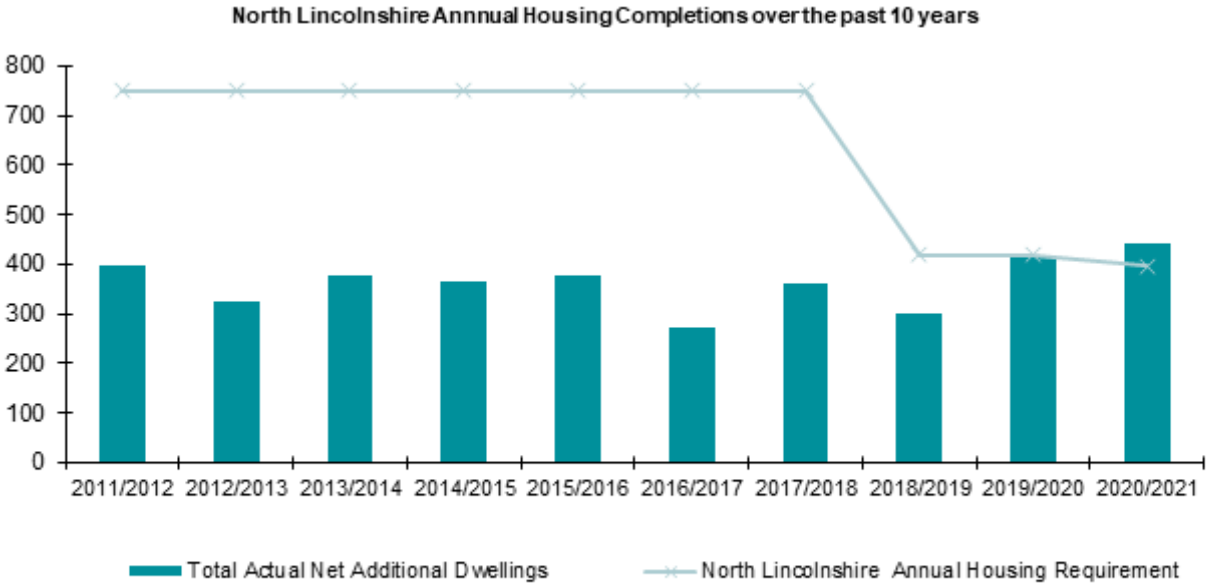
1 Introduction

- 1.1 The delivery of new homes is a key national issue. In recent years, the Government has implemented a number of measures and reforms to the planning system intended to deliver more housing, improve housing affordability and remove barriers to development. Local planning authorities (LPAs) are challenged to be more proactive in increasing the speed, quality and quantity of housing supply to meet the identified housing needs of their local area.
- 1.2 Stimulating and supporting home building is particularly important in light of the Covid-19 crisis which has had a negative impact on development activity. Whilst the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable residents will always be the Council's concern for action, supporting and stimulating the public and private home building sectors to recover from this crisis is important, particularly in delivering homes for local North Lincolnshire residents.
- 1.3 In 2018, the Government published a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that was recently updated in July 2021. As part of the changes, the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) was introduced by the Government as a monitoring tool to demonstrate whether local areas are building enough homes to meet their housing need. The Housing Delivery Test (HDT) is an annual measurement of housing delivery. It reviews the total amount of housing delivered in a plan making area over the preceding three financial years, against the number of homes required in that area over the same rolling three year period. The results of the HDT are published annually and a Local Authority is required to:
- Publish an action plan if housing delivery falls below 95% of an LPA's adopted housing requirement over the previous three years.
 - Apply a 20% buffer to the Local Planning Authority's five-year housing land supply if housing delivery falls below 85% of the adopted housing requirement (this in effect would require the Council to find additional sites for an additional 20% of the housing requirement).
 - The 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' in the NPPF (Paragraph 11) would apply automatically in decision making were housing delivery falls below 75% of the local authority's housing requirement.
- 1.4 All LPAs with a delivery performance of less than 95% must prepare an Action Plan. This is set out in the National Planning Practice Guidance as:
- A document produced by the local planning authority to reflect challenges and identify actions to address under-delivery against the housing requirement in the area. The document's purpose is to detail the reasons for under-delivery and the steps the authority intends to take in mitigation and drive up delivery in the area. A good action plan will identify ways to reduce the risk of further under-delivery and set out the case for measures to maintain or improve levels of delivery.*
- 1.5 This Action Plan is intended to be a practical document, focussed on effective measures aimed at improving delivery within an area underpinned by local evidence and research of key issues. This is North Lincolnshire Council's Housing Action Plan.
- 1.6 The council recognise that delivering growth is complex. Whilst a number of the actions identified in the Action Plan are solely within the remit of the council to resolve; to successfully respond to the challenge of increasing, and then maintaining, housing delivery the council will also need the support and co-operation of those involved in delivering homes including landowners and house builders.

2 Housing Delivery

- 2.1 In January 2021, the Government published the 2020 Housing Delivery Test results for all Local Authorities across England. This set of results noted that North Lincolnshire Council achieved 94% (of its housing requirement -1180 dwellings out of a target of 1114 dwellings as calculated by the Standard Methodology) of its required delivery of homes – an increase of 19% in delivery since the previous test. This means the Council needs to plan for a 5 % buffer and set out an action plan for how they intend to increase housing delivery across the North Lincolnshire.
- 2.2 The Council is committed to creating the best place for our residents and businesses by being the best council we can be. We want the area and its communities to be safe, well, prosperous and connected. The council is bringing forward transformational growth and working hard to bring forward a new local plan that can guide development up to 2038. The Submission Local Plan documents are expected to be published for public consultation in Autumn 2021 and will provide the framework for housing delivery over the next 18 years.
- 2.3 Whilst the Council has identified sites and planned for growth, actual delivery rates over the past 10 years have not matched those set out in planning policy. The introduction of the standard method has significantly reduced the local housing needs target that is set out in current policy from 754 dwellings per annum to 383 dwellings per annum on 1 April 2021. Graph 1 below shows that North Lincolnshire delivered 442 dwellings in 2020/2021 and it met its housing requirement. This shows that some of the actions implemented during the last 18 months have assisted in the additional delivery.

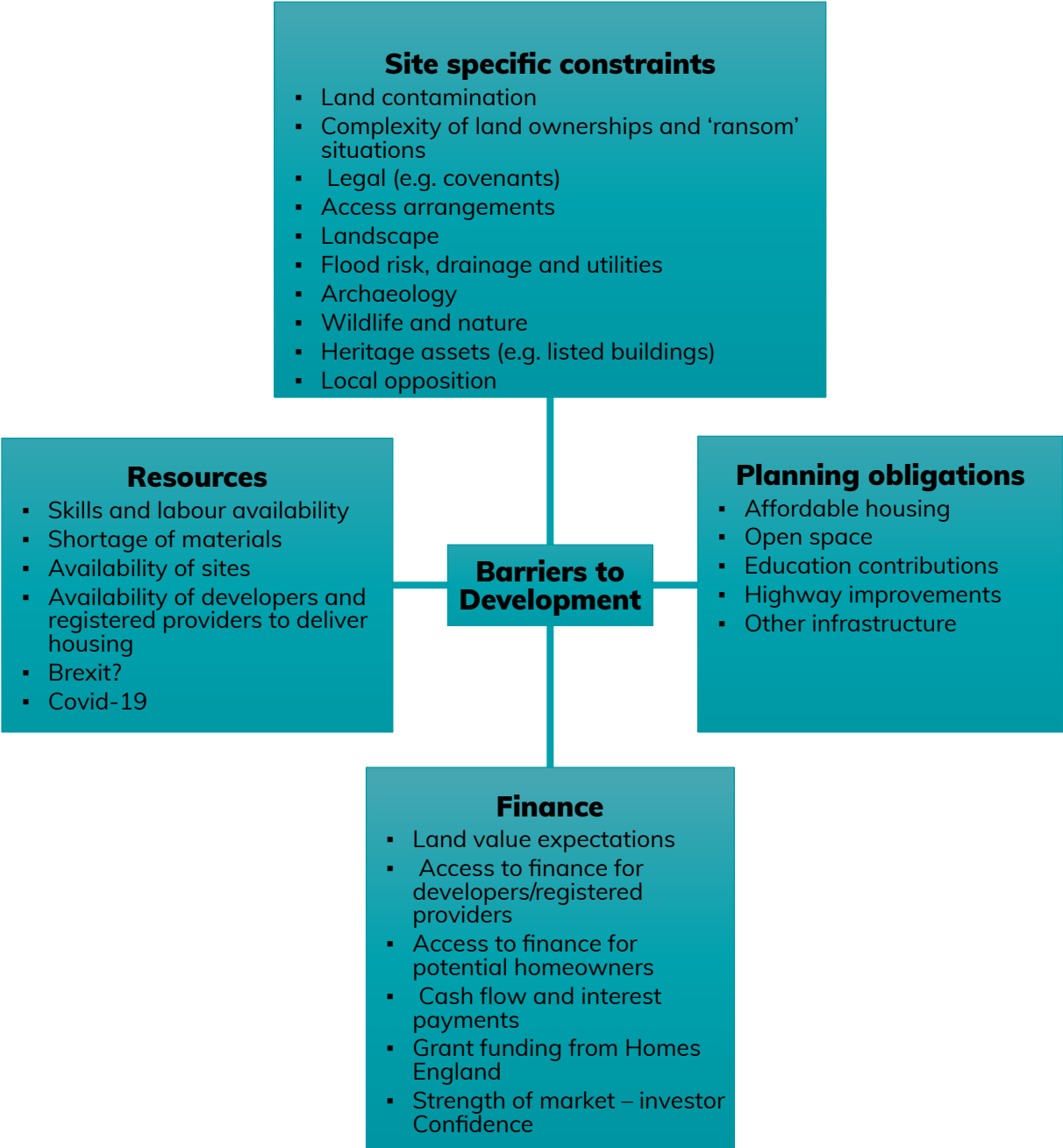
Graph 1: North Lincolnshire Annual Housing Completions over the past 10 years.



3 Barriers to delivery

- 3.1 Developing houses is often a complex process. There are a number of challenges and barriers to overcome before a buyer can take ownership of a property. Many of these barriers are macro-economic in nature, for example, access to finance for both developers and potential house buyers, whilst others may be more site specific such as land contamination. These barriers can affect both the supply and demand side of housing delivery.
- 3.2 The following provides a brief summary of the key challenges associated with bringing housing development forward in general. We have identified these from discussions with landowners, housebuilders, agents, and other stakeholders, as well as considering the experience from elsewhere across the country. It should be noted that the barriers will range from site to site and are dependent, to an extent on the size or nature of a developer.

Figure 1: Barriers to Development



Recovery of the house building development industry from Covid-19

- 3.3 The likely problems arising from the crisis will almost inevitably have a detrimental impact on housing delivery, even if only short term. This Action Plan has been developed to be flexible, adaptive and be able to reflect emerging opportunities for additional housing delivery to help in an economic recovery post Covid-19.

Actions for the Council

- 3.4 This Housing Delivery Action Plan sets out a range of practical and proactive measures that the Council is putting in place to address low rates of delivery, and a process to monitor implementation.
- 3.5 Successful delivery of this plan will involve working with landowners, developers, registered providers, Homes England, and other development bodies as well as infrastructure providers to ensure that more new housing is delivered. The Council are working with the landowners, developers and statutory agencies including the Environment Agency and Homes England to assist in delivering the upfront infrastructure required to deliver the Lincolnshire Lakes development. This partnership working will accelerate the pace of delivery of new homes.

4 Key Actions and Updates:

Improve the planning process and consistency in decision making

4.1 The council recognises the importance of its planning service in enabling and supporting growth and ensuring the delivery of an efficient service. The Council will:

- Ensure that planning can support future housing delivery and economic growth through ongoing service improvements. These improvements have included appointing new planning officers to vacant posts within the Development Management Team and creating a Housing Inward Investment Officer post to assist housing delivery by providing support and advice to the development industry. The council have also created new posts within the Development Management Team to provide additional capacity to assist in determining planning applications. These posts include a new duty officer and a major applications officer.
- The Council will use the Strategic Development Team as a tool for proactively engaging with applicants of large-scale housing development.
- Continue ongoing dialogue with landowners and developers (including agents and registered providers) to understand what progress is being made on sites. The Council uses this information to help identify potential solutions as well as keep the housing land supply position under review.
- Preparing a new local plan which will set out a clear planning policy framework for future growth in accordance with the revised NPPF. The council are currently preparing the Submission version of the local plan which expected to be published for public consultation Autumn 2021.
- Annually update the Brownfield Register and enable use of the permission in principle mechanism. The council are currently reviewing the Brownfield Register for 2021 and have identified several sites that meet the criteria to be included on Part 2 of the Register.
- Supporting the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans, some of which are considering options for supporting additional growth beyond that set out in the Local Plan. The council are currently supporting 13 local communities to develop Neighbourhood Plans for their area. For more information please see the link below:

<https://www.northlincs.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/planning-policy-neighbourhood-planning/>

- Review the use of planning conditions to ensure these are applied consistently in a reasonable and proportionate and timely manner.
- Improve early engagement on strategic sites to involve representatives of local communities in early place-shaping activity to ensure local views are understood from the outset, generate greater ownership and buy-in to the planning process.
- Improve S106 procedures¹ including a consistent approach to negotiations, decision making and streamlining of internal processes, including a consistent approach to the consideration and prioritisation of developer contributions to infrastructure projects.
- Continue using Planning Performance Agreements to direct and tailor resources for determining all aspects of the planning process from pre-application stage to the
- discharging of conditions.

Supporting the Market to Deliver

4.2 The council has a role to play in supporting the market to deliver and through making land available for development at a range of locations and scales. The council will:

- Consider the potential to develop sites in Council ownership, including masterplanning sites which could be accelerated to deliver additional housing.
- Explore models of delivery (for example Self Build, partnership working, joint ventures and off-site construction) with a number of different partners, designated to accelerate delivery.

¹ A new Planning Obligations SPD is being prepared to support the emerging North Lincolnshire Local Plan 2020-2038 and comply with the new NPPF. The planning service have also invested in new software which has assisted in monitoring S106 obligations and trigger points.

- The Council will work with the Greater Lincolnshire Local Economic Partnership and other partners to unlock funding to overcome development barriers.
- The council will continue to work with developers and landowners to bring forward allocated housing sites.
- Prepare a housing portfolio in partnership with developers/ landowners to advise on all housing allocations and sites with planning permission for housing which have been stalled.
- Set up a development forum. The council are arranging the first developer forum to take place Autumn 2021. Draft terms of reference for forum have been prepared and will be discussed and agreed at the first meeting.
- Act proactively to seek out opportunities such as attending conferences, webinars and construction industry events to market the area to potential new investors.
- The council have appointed a Housing Inward Investment Officer. The officer is responsible for working with a wide range of partners to increase housing delivery opportunities in the area.
- Work towards maintaining a five year housing land supply.

Working with Government and Other Stakeholders

4.3 The Council recognises that it will not be able to act alone and that a key relationship with Government will be needed to help improve local delivery. The Council will:

- Work with neighbouring authorities to explore similar opportunities and seek to establish closer working relations with relevant government departments and agencies.
- Monitor and bid for infrastructure funding as and when opportunities arise.
- Set up a development forum to discuss supply and market issues with developers and partners.

5 Monitoring and Performance

- 5.1 The success of this Action Plan will ultimately be evaluated through the impacts that occur with housing delivery. North Lincolnshire has seen an increase in housing delivery over the past 3 years from 299 homes being delivered in 2018/2019 to 442 homes being delivered in 2020/2021. A number of the actions identified in the previous Action Plans have been implemented and have assisted to help increase in housing delivery within North Lincolnshire.
- 5.2 The council will continue to work proactively with developers/ landowners to assist in accelerating housing delivery. The actions within this plan will be implemented over the next 12 months and monitored annually through the Housing Investment Delivery Group to consider additional actions or necessary amendments.
- 5.3 The Council welcomes suggestions on any future actions to help support housing delivery in North Lincolnshire. You can contact the Strategic Housing Team using the following details:

6 Contact Details

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