

### Inspector's question 93

I would welcome the Council's observations on the representations claiming that policy BE4 would be unsound; 1185 by Michael Wood of Indigo planning Limited on behalf of Lands Improvement Holdings PLC and 1842 Tim Northey of Rectory Homes.

### AVDC's Response

Michael Wood of Indigo Planning Limited states that paragraph 8.48 supporting policy BE4 confirms that government policy is to make best use of what land is available and that central to this policy is the need to use land efficiently. This is not reflected in the policy in its current state, and this central objective should be reflected in the drafting of the policy.

The Council acknowledges the representations from Michael Wood. It is proposed that policy BE4 is amended to make reference to the need for the densities of developments to generally constitute effective land use as per Government policy referred to in supporting paragraph 8.48. However, it is important that this is balanced by consideration of each site's context and the need to deliver satisfactory residential amenity in accordance with one of the core planning principles set out in the NPPF under paragraph 17.

Tim Northey of Rectory Homes states that policy BE4 does not comply with paragraph 47 of the NPPF which states that Local Planning Authorities should set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances. The policy needs to either be amended include more specific guidance or deleted as it is currently not in an effective form.

The Council acknowledges the representations from Tim Northey. The character of settlements and localities in Aylesbury Vale District differs to a large extent across the district. This includes the density of built development. It is essential that policy BE4 is not too prescriptive as the variety across the district would make this an ineffective approach and would not accord with the NPPF's requirements in relation to avoiding prescriptive detail in policies. The Council does however acknowledge that there is need for further guidance and the setting out of key principles in relation to the policy. Therefore, the Council proposes that reference is made to the proposed Design Supplementary Policy Document which will further expand on the contents of the policy.

Below is set out the proposed amended policy.

#### BE4 Density of new development

Proposed densities of developments should ~~reflect those~~ **generally constitute effective use of the land and reflect the densities** of their surroundings, and will be ~~determined~~ **appraised** on a site-by-site basis to

**ensure satisfactory residential amenity.** Where large scale developments are proposed, particularly towards the edge of settlements, higher density areas should be located towards the centre of the sites whilst the rural edge should be a lower density. **The Design Supplementary Planning Document will provide further guidance to assist applicants on this matter.**