

Matter 5: Dalton Barracks

5.8 Is it realistic for 1,200 dwellings to be delivered on the site during the plan period? What are the arrangements for the relocation of the existing military personnel on the site and are they realistic? How would the development be phased, and how would this relate to the continuing operation of the barracks?

We have concerns relating to the deliverability of Dalton Barracks.

Para. 2.53 of the LPP2 indicates that Dalton Barracks was originally identified for release for housing by 2029. However, dialogue between the Council and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) has indicated that the site could be released sooner and in a manner that will ensure that 1,200 dwellings could be delivered on the site up to 2031.

Para. 2.54 of the LPP2 indicates that around half of the allocation could be delivered before the military units are re-located, which is now envisaged no later than 2026.

The proposed delivery assumptions underpinning this timeframe are provided within the Council's Housing Trajectory Topic Paper (February 2018) and within the Statement of Common Ground between the Council and Carter Jonas on behalf of the DIO. This work indicates that the first 50 dwellings being anticipated 2024/25, with delivery expected to rise to 225 dwellings per annum by 2029/30. We note that no information has been provided about the likely phasing and whether the remaining military uses will be compatible with new residential development in the short term to facilitate this early development.

In any event, we consider the envisaged delivery rate to be very unrealistic. These concerns relate to the site's lead-in time to first completions and its delivery rate assumptions. Each is discussed in turn below.

Lead-in Times: At the present time, there doesn't appear to be any progress on the site with regards to a planning application. This is understandable given that the site is presently located within the Green Belt. Moreover, we are aware that the policy framework within the LPP2 also requires the production and adopted of an SPD for the site.

The Council's latest Local Development Scheme indicates that the required SPD will be produced 'by others'. No information is provided as to the progress of this SPD, but clearly the Local Planning Authority will be required to consider it before approving / adopting it as SPD.

The preparation and approval of an SPD; the submission and approval of an application; the signing of a Section 106 Agreement; conveyancing; the preparation and approval of reserved matters; and site clearance are going to take a significant period of time,

We note that a recent publication by a national house builder ('The role of Land Pipelines in the UK Housebuilding Process', September 2017)¹ indicates that the process could take up to 6.6 years on average. Additional research² indicates that it will take a site the size of Dalton Barracks between 5.3 and 6.9 years to come forward in just the post planning approval phase. When factoring in the time for an application, this would increase further.

¹ https://cweconomics.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/CWEconomicsReport_Land_Banking.pdf

² Page 8, <https://lichfields.uk/media/1728/start-to-finish.pdf>

With the need to produce an SPD the above timeframes will be extended further, perhaps by over a year. Consequently, a realistic lead-in time of at least 7.5 years should be allowed for. This would mean the earliest first completions is likely to occur would be 2025/26, a year later than currently envisaged.

Delivery Rates: Research³, which has assessed the lead-in times and delivery rates of over 70 large sites across the Country, concludes that:

“...it is striking that annual average delivery on sites of up to 1,499 units barely exceeds 100 units per annum, and there were no examples in this category that reached a rate of 200 per annum.”

On the basis of this information, the annual delivery rates for the proposed allocation are significantly inflated. Using the lead-in assumptions proposed in this report and a delivery rate of a maximum of 100 dwellings per annum, the following housing trajectory should be used:

Table 1: Housing Trajectory

Total Dwellings	2025 /26	2026 /27	2027 /28	2028 /29	2029 /30	2030 /31
550 dwellings	50	100	100	100	100	100

This analysis suggests that in order for Core Policy 8b to be considered as being effective, its anticipated delivery should be reduced to 550 dwellings over the Plan period. This would not have an impact on its longer-term deliverability, or planning credentials, but provide a realistic assessment of what contribution the site can make to meeting the Vale’s housing needs, as well as the Vale’s proportion of Oxford City’s unmet housing needs, by 3031.

Consequently, there is a need for the LPP2 to allocate additional land to accommodate a further 650 dwellings.

Furthermore, we are aware that similar assertions were made by the DIO in relation to the Ministry of Defence Site in Ashchurch during the formation of the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy, before the site was made unavailable for residential development by the DIO, just prior to the publication of the Main Modification of the Plan. We also note that the LPP2’s Sustainability Appraisal also raises concerns relating to the deliverability of the allocation and the potential for the DIO’s policy to alter and deliverability to slip further into the Plan period (page 90 of the Appendices refers).

LRM Planning
June 2018

³ <https://lichfields.uk/media/1728/start-to-finish.pdf>