



Winchester
City Council

COUNCIL MEETING – 25 September 2019

Question under Council Procedure Rule 15(3)

QUESTION 15

From: Councillor Pearson

To: The Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Wellbeing (Cllr Porter)

“What steps are being made to ensure that Commercial Housing and Council Housing are built to BREEAM (Outstanding) i.e. Passive Housing, in line with the Council’s stated aspirations?”

Reply

The Council ensures that all new homes that are part of the new build programme are built to high sustainability standards, in practice this equates to a 20% uplift on existing Building Regulations. This is achieved through concentrating on improvements to the thermal efficiency of the building - referred to as a “fabric first approach”.

Passive House (Passivhaus) is a particular certified standard or methodology of building housing aimed specifically at reducing energy use and a pilot scheme is being considered using a local certified Architect practice.

All housing developments in Winchester should meet the policies set out in the adopted Local Plan regarding sustainability which is primarily dealt with by Policy CP.11 which, in turn, have to align with Government policy.

Our Local Plan was ambitious at that time it was adopted in 2013, and Policy CP.11 set a requirement for new dwellings to be built to the equivalent of the Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 for energy and level 4 for water (unless it was not feasible or viable).

However in March 2015, the government updated national policy on housing standards and zero carbon homes which affected the implementation of this policy. Current Government advice now sets a maximum standard of 110 litres/day for water efficiency and the equivalent of Code level 4 for energy.

The City Council is not therefore in a position whereby it can require all new houses in the district to achieve BREEAM “Outstanding” rating.

If we tried to insist upon meeting the BREEAM standard, and refused planning permission for homes that fell short of this, we would be likely to lose any subsequent appeals, which would be decided by a Government appointed planning inspector, as there would be no policy basis for imposing this requirement at the present time.

However, we are in the process of developing a new Local Plan and, as part of this process, we will looking at how we can take the climate emergency agenda forward including the sustainability requirements for new housing.”