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Planning. Design. Economics.

How well are current Local Plans performing in meeting housing needs? How might future reforms to the system help unblock land supply?

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Agenda

- Progress with Local Plans
- Local Plan Expert Group
 - Remit and approach
 - Its findings
 - Areas of potential reform
- Future Challenges
- Conclusions

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Progress with Local Plans: Why does it matter?

- Because our planning system is (supposed to be) Plan-led...

Core planning principles

17. Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking. These 12 principles are that **planning should:**

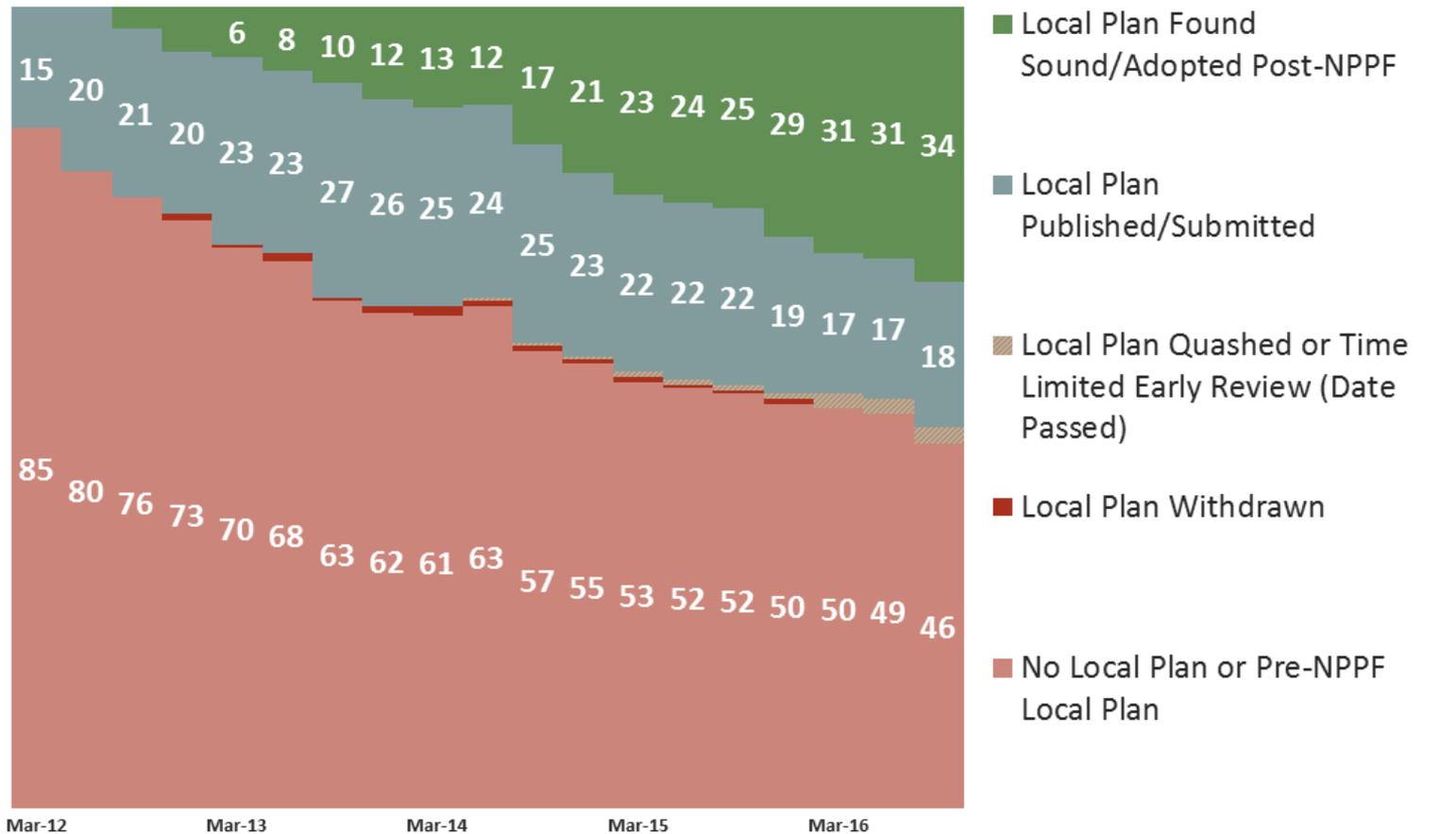
- **be genuinely plan-led**, empowering local people to shape their surroundings, with succinct local and neighbourhood plans setting out a positive vision for the future of the area. Plans should be kept up-to-date, and be based on joint working and co-operation to address larger than

the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. **Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area**, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a **clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area**, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;

How well are current Local Plans performing in meeting housing needs?



Progress with Local Plans: Still a long way to go



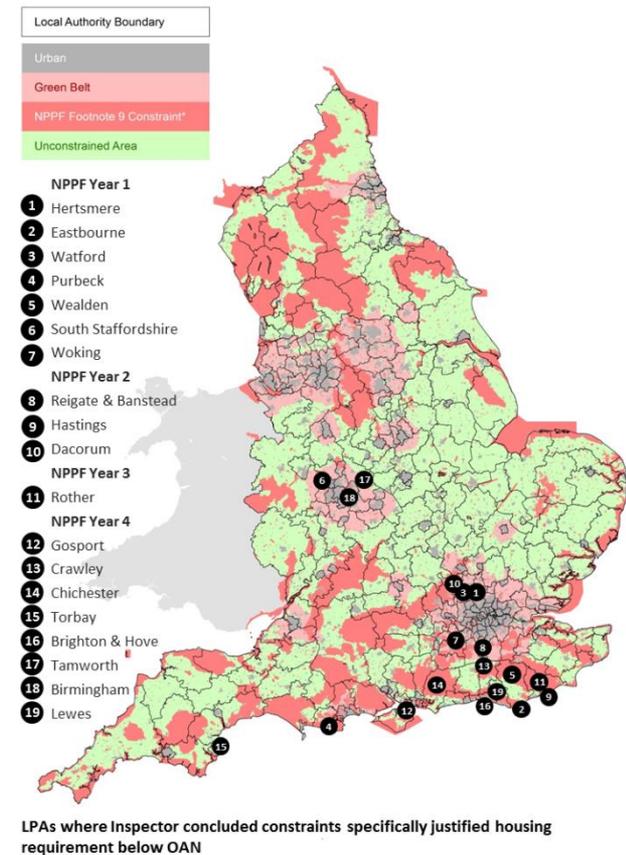
Local Plan Progress by Local Planning Authority (England excluding London) since introduction of NPPF (March 2013 to Sept 2016)

% figures rounded

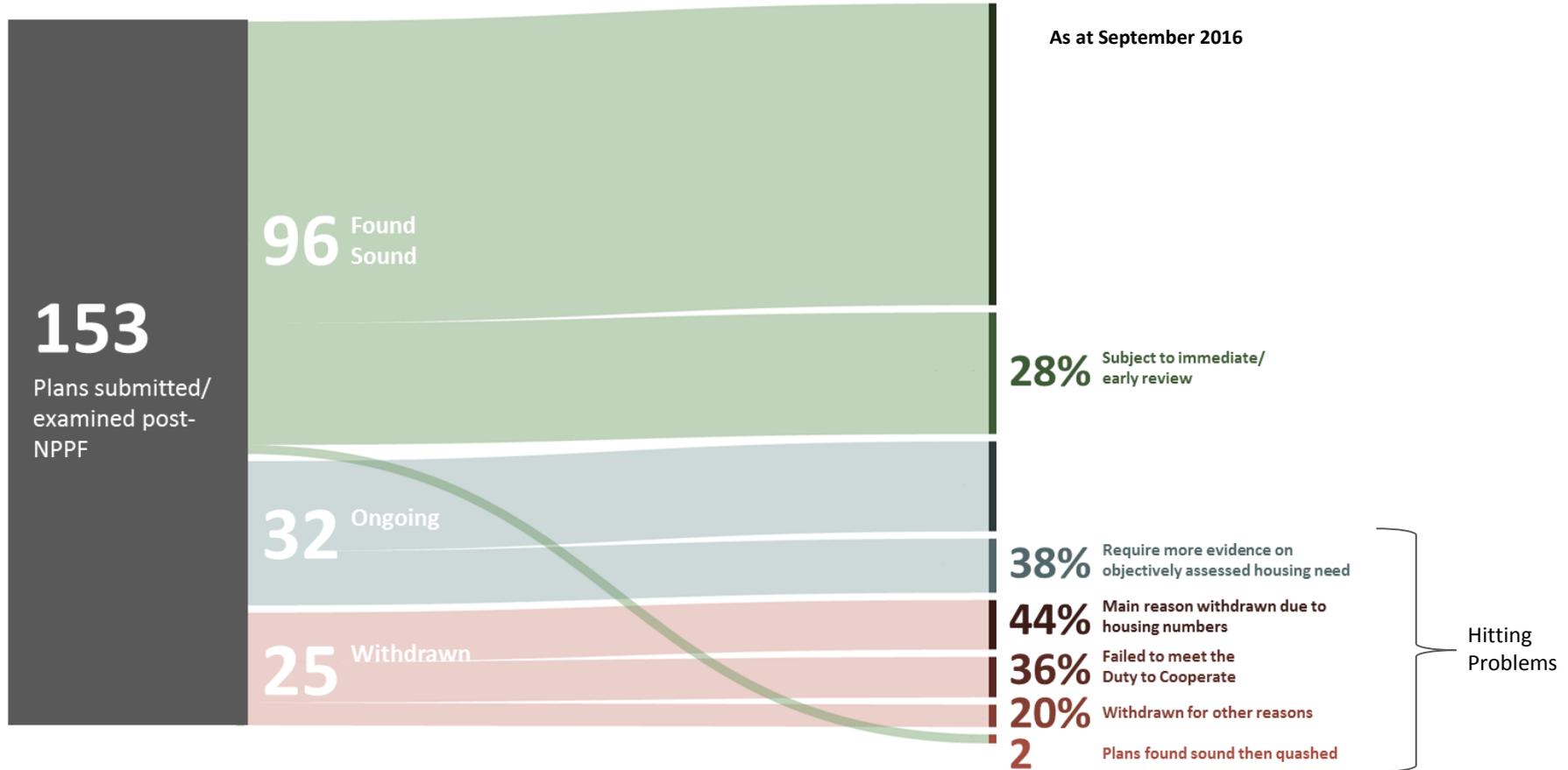
Progress with Local Plans:

Few justifying not meeting OAN

- 19 Plans have justified a target below OAN citing significant adverse impacts/no capacity
- Year 1 based on RS and legacy ‘balancing’ exercises – increased number in Year 4
- Early review in some cases
- Generally areas constrained by ‘footnote 9’ constraints
- Little evidence of plans going on to quantify or identify how ‘unmet needs’ are then to be addressed
- And in the vacuum, Inspectors letting it lie



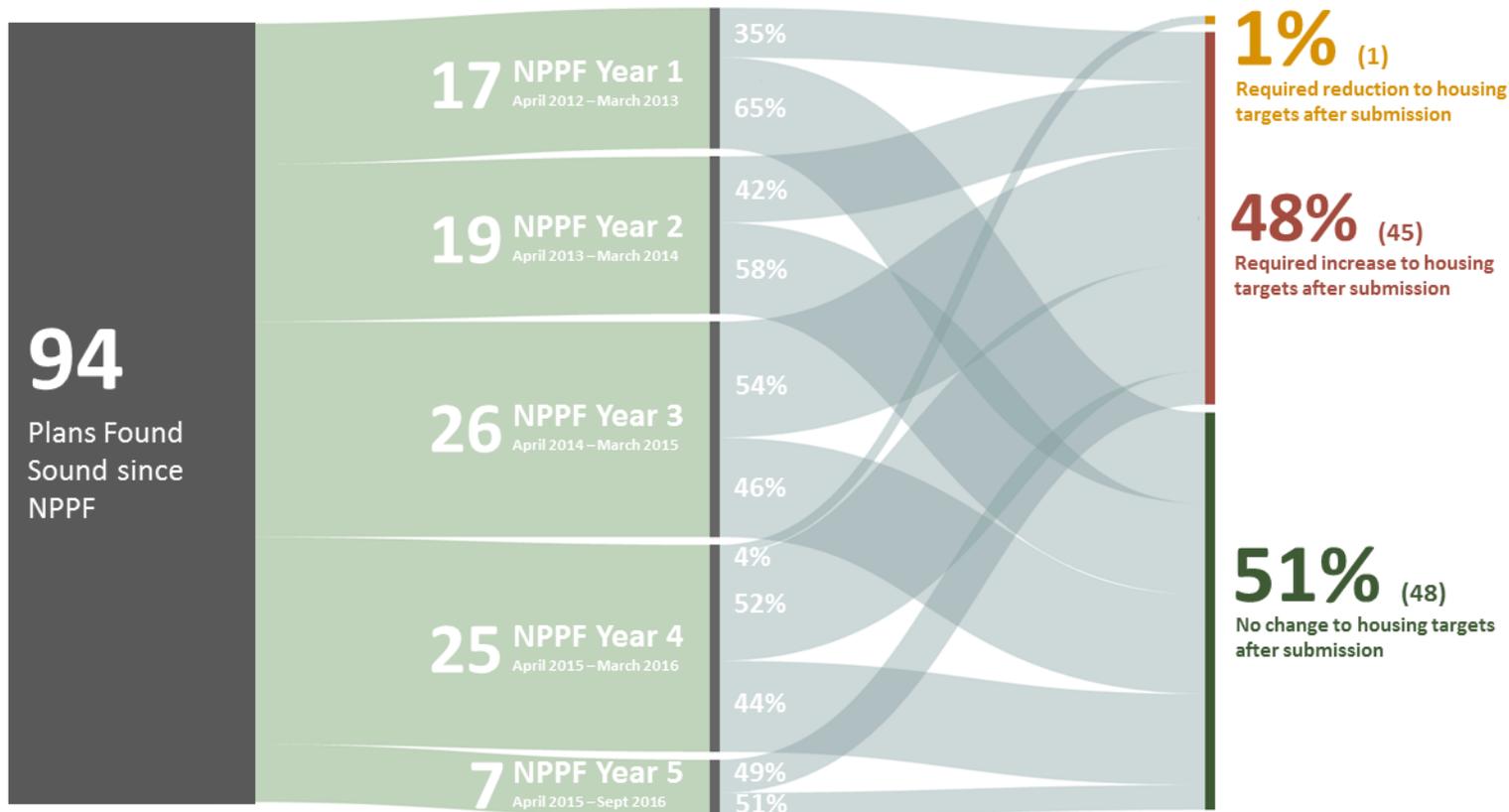
Progress with Local Plans: Of the plans submitted, a quarter have faltered



Tracking Local Plan Progress Post-NPPF

n.b. All Local Plans (Strategic Issues / 'Core Strategies') Examined Post-NPPF. Excludes London Borough and any single issue/focussed review plans which did not address housing requirements/policies.

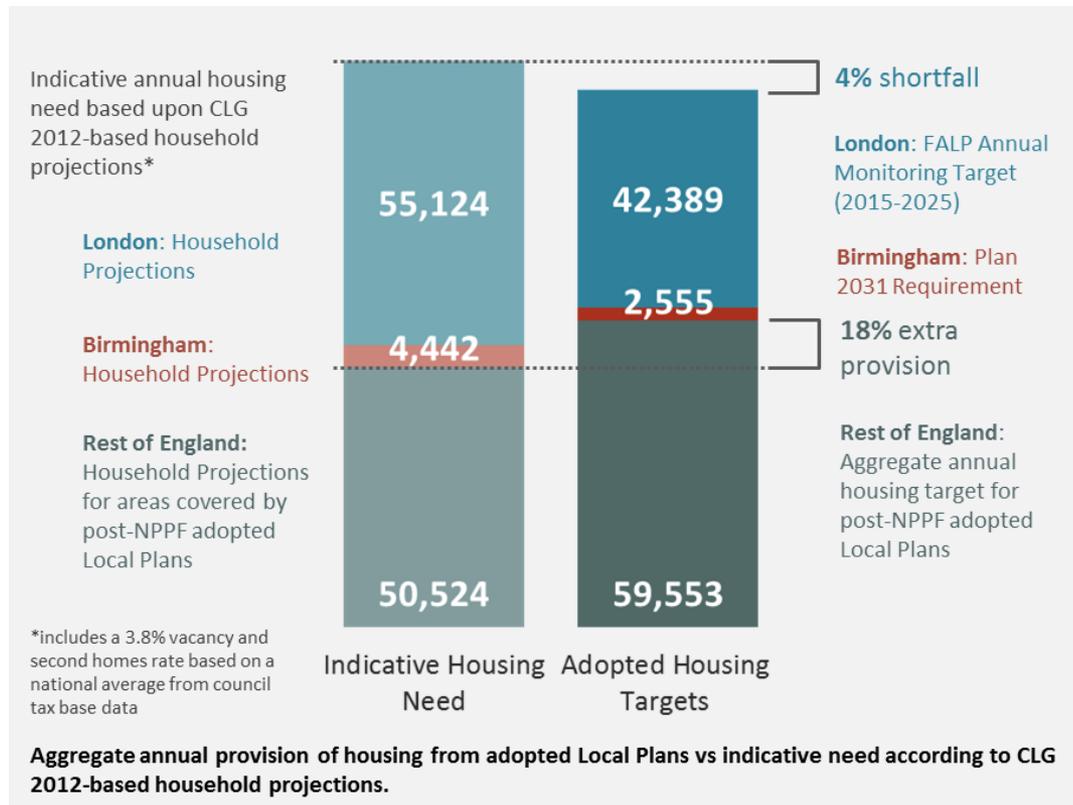
Progress with Local Plans: Half increase housing target to be found sound



Submitted Housing Requirements vs Adopted Housing Requirements

n.b. All Local Plans (Strategic Issues / 'Core Strategies') Found Sound Post-NPPF. Excludes London Borough and any single issue/focussed review plans which did not address housing requirements/policies. Excludes two Plans that had their housing numbers subsequently quashed.

Progress with Local Plans: Plans mostly meeting h/h growth



- Aggregating planned provision and comparing against projected household growth gives +ve picture
- But not in London & Birmingham
- Unclear whether this will hold up when GB LPAs produce Plans

Progress with Local Plans:

Drawing conclusions – where are we at?

- Local plans (with some exceptions) are (in aggregate and on paper at least) being broadly effective at:
 - Setting requirements which would significantly boost housing supply if met; and
 - Making allocations and releasing land for housing through a Plan-led system.
- But:
 - It is taking too long, with many LPAs still not at the starting block; and
 - Achieving that outcome is requiring rigorous testing through Examination and lots of Plans to be modified to address shortcomings
 - The issue of unmet needs and cross boundary working remains unsatisfactory

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Local Plans Expert Group

- Remit

“To look at how the Local Plan process be simplified with the aim of slashing the amount of time it takes for local authorities to get them in place”

- Findings: Key Barriers to plan progress:
 - Lack of clarity - particularly OAN, SHMA, Green Belt, etc.
 - Lack of commitment - locally and nationally
 - Lack of support - resources, central support, exemplars
 - Duty to Co-operate
 - Too many changes - continually moving the goal posts
 - The process is obscure, complex and hard to navigate

Local Plans Expert Group

Faster, simpler more engaging

- Reduce and dramatically simplify the evidence base + clear guidance
- Timetabled plan making: max of two years from start to final adoption
- Removing the Regulations which prevent sensible amendments to local plans in response to community consultation
- A stable plan-making environment - freeze key assumptions, insulate against external changes
- Early MOTs of emerging plans and staged examinations to prevent late failures
- A greater role for Neighbourhood Plans in areas that want them, with Local Plans dealing only with strategic issues

Local Plans Expert Group

Meeting and Delivering Housing Needs

- A clear and simplified (ie proportionate) approach to calculating housing needs consistent with objectives to significantly boost supply
- A standard calculation of five five-year housing land supply, which is then monitored annually and signed off.
- Automatic release of additional plan-led sites (20%) if monitoring shows that the housing requirements are not being delivered (instead of planning by appeal)
- Strengthening the duty to cooperate
- Government to incentivise growth points beyond the Green Belt

Local Plans Expert Group

What's next? (1/2)

- Government consultation on LPEG
- Select committee July 2016
- A new Ministerial team with a deep in-tray
 - One of many other potential reforms
 - e.g. NPPF changes, Implementing Housing and Planning Act 2016, Neighbourhood Planning Bill
- A joined up approach and a new narrative
 - Focus on increasing housing supply
 - But Birmingham/Bradford call-ins over Green Belt?

Local Plans Expert Group

What's next? (2/2)

Sajid Javid, SoS for Communities and Local Government:

*“There are already many excellent examples of local authorities working together to meet the housing needs of their areas ... **I want more joint planning** ... and, of course, **more plans put in place. I want all areas to have one** ...*

*The House will not be surprised to learn that **I agree with the central thrust of the local plans expert group's recommendations in this area.** We need more co-operation and joint planning. The requirement to have a plan should not be in doubt, and **the process for putting a plan in place needs to be streamlined.** **As the expert group set out, most of those changes can and should be made through national policy and guidance,** rather than through primary legislation. Should primary legislation be required, I look to use this Bill as the vehicle for it.”*

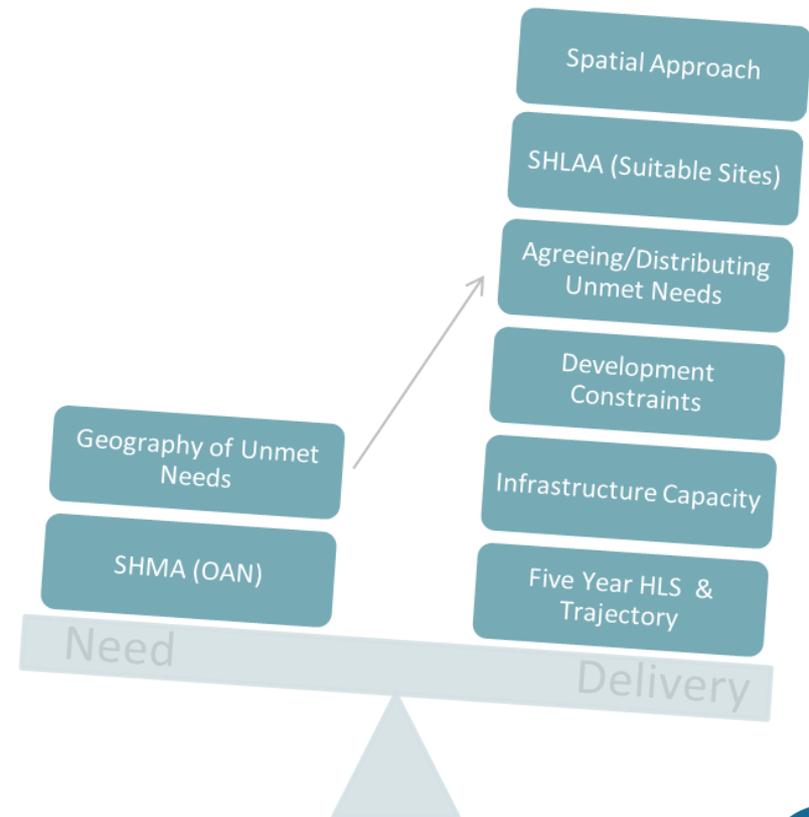
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Future Challenges

Implications of LPEG?

- Shifting debate on Plans from need to delivery?
- From 'need' (i.e. how much) and towards 'delivery' (i.e. where and when)
- 5 year housing land supply
 - annual process/sign-off?
- Framed within concept of 'joint' / 'strategic' plans
 - Joint trajectories?

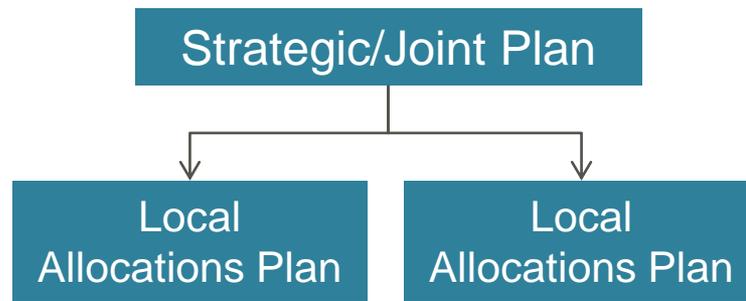


How well are current Local Plans performing in meeting housing needs?

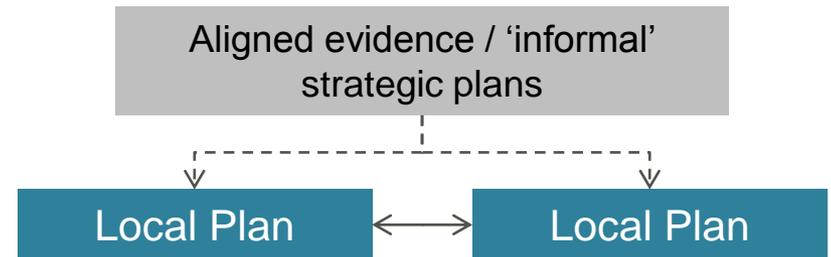
Future Challenges

Joint/Strategic Planning (1/2)

- A return to Structure Plans?



- Or aligning separate plans better?



- A strategic tier of plan-making:
 - a useful vehicle for aligning decision making/timescales; but
 - Does not remove technical and political/governance challenges
 - Need to avoid 'double handling' through 'two-tier' plan-making

Future Challenges

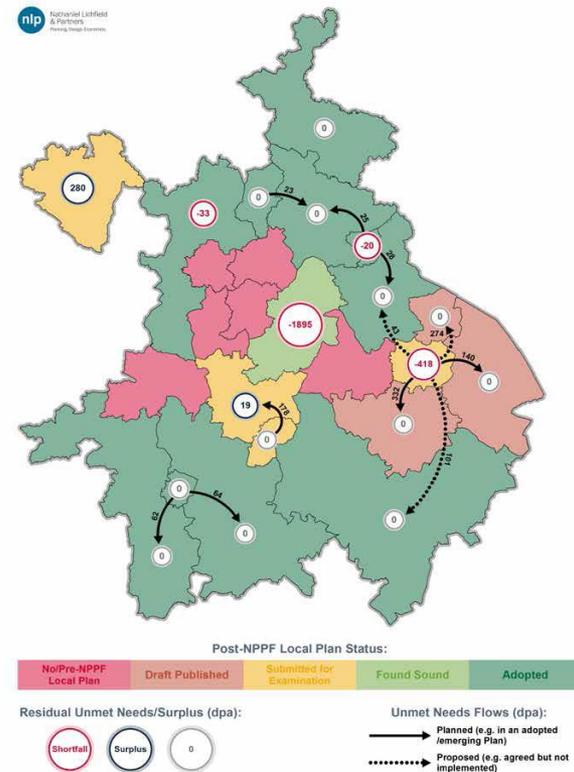
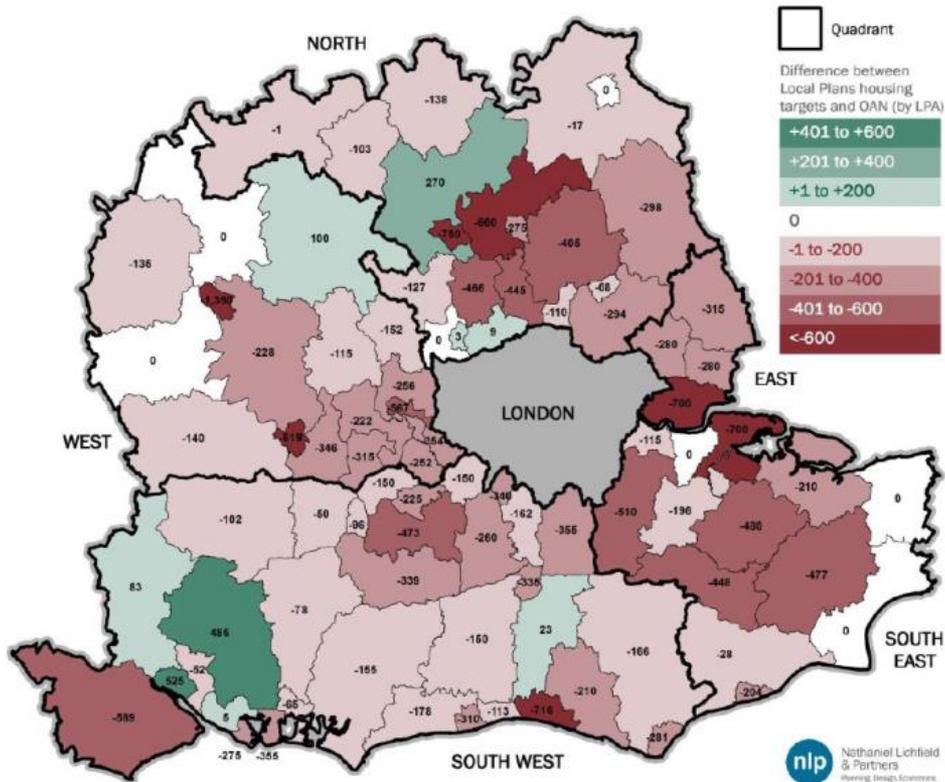
Joint/Strategic Planning (2/2)

- Technical challenges
 - Aligned evidence base and decision making frameworks
 - Defining boundaries for Joint Planning – what's in and what's out?
 - SEA / Sustainability Appraisal
 - Justifying spatial choices
 - HMAs are not blank canvasses
 - Act establishes primary duty is LAs to plan for their own areas
 - Resources and engagement
- Learn lessons:
 - South Worcestershire | Cambridge/South Cambridgeshire | Oxfordshire | Newcastle-Gateshead | Greater Manchester | Derby/South Derbyshire/Amber Valley

Future Challenges

Dealing with big city 'overspill'

- Still a vacuum for dealing with our biggest cities and their hinterlands



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Conclusions

- Local Plans in last chance saloon, but another big push from Govt
- 2017 deadline still on the table
- Streamlined approach – quicker and faster
- Await details in White Paper (November 23rd?)
- More focus on strategic planning / Neighbourhood planning
- But difficult issues not going away
 - Evidence / spatial choices / infrastructure / governance and decision – making / deliverability
- Requires concerted focus and resources from public and private sector



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