

Our Ref SGB/AB

Fiona Riley
Senior Planning Policy Officer
Hartlepool Borough Council
Civic Centre
Victoria Road
Hartlepool
TS24 8AY

16th June 2017

Dear Fiona

Re: Supporting Letter re Elwick Bypass and Grade Separated Junction: National Productivity Investment Fund

I am writing on behalf of my client, Tunstall Homes, to support the bid for funding submitted by Hartlepool Borough Council under the National Productivity Investment Fund, relating to the delivery of the Elwick Bypass and grade separated junction.

For clarification, we are the appointed planning consultants who have submitted an outline application to Hartlepool Borough Council for residential development on land to the north-west of Hartlepool which comprises of a strategic housing site capable of delivering the majority of housing growth in the short, medium and long-term for the Council's housing needs over the forthcoming plan period. The site is the preferred housing site being advanced by the Council through their emerging Local Plan which is due to be considered at an Examination in Public in September of this year.

On behalf of Tunstall Homes, we submitted a planning application on 2nd October 2014 under reference number H/2014/0428, which was described as:

"Outline application with all matters reserved, residential development comprising up to 2000 homes of up to two and a half storeys in height, new distributor road, local centre, amenity open space and structure planting."

The quantum of housing proposed was reduced to 1200 homes on 29th January 2015 and the application is currently undetermined at the point of this letter being written.

The application has been subject to a Holding Direction from the Highways Agency who have been concerned about the impact of traffic arising from the development on the strategic highway network, in particular the A19 and the junctions at Dalton Piercy and Elwick that currently exist. The Agency have been concerned that traffic arising from this and other developments would lead to a potential increase in right-turning movements across the existing busy and high speed dual carriageway which would be detrimental to highway safety.

The effect of the Holding Directions has been to prevent development of this site coming forward.

Discussions have been taking place on a regular basis and have involved the Highways Agency, Local Highway Authority, Local Planning Authority, Durham Police, Stockton Police and Stockton Planning

Authority, having regard to the impact of the proposed works on not only Hartlepool, but also Stockton Borough Council.

It is acknowledged that the development will potentially lead to an increase in traffic using these junctions. It is acknowledged that these junctions do require a long-term programme to close them, preventing dangerous right turn manoeuvres and the provision of a grade separated junction is clearly a requirement. It is equally the case that the consequential provisions of closing the central reservation would lead to pressures at other nearby junctions including that of the A179 serving the northern part of the town. This would require other works to take place at other junctions with attendant costs and consequences to the flow of traffic.

It has always been the case of the developer that the provision of the High Tunstall housing scheme would mark the first phase of what will eventually be a western bypass for the town of Hartlepool. The traffic modelling carried out associated with the development makes it very clear that the delivery of that western bypass will significantly affect traffic flows in the town, removing a significant amount of traffic from critical town centre junctions. At present, it is necessary for any traffic travelling from north to south in Hartlepool to do so in a manner that compromises and brings pressure to bear on the town centre infrastructure network. The configuration of the town does not allow for any other situation to occur. The strategic benefits that would be provided by this scheme would be significant and would lead to measurable improvements in air quality, traffic flows, economic development through shorter journey times and greater accessibility as well as improving the quality of life for residents of Hartlepool.

It is equally apparent that this development cannot start to bring about those developments without the precursor improvements being carried out to the strategic highway infrastructure, i.e., closure of the central reservation and the provision of grade separated junctions.

The scheme requires significant improvements to a number of other causes including provision of local education facilities, strategic open space and ecological mitigation and it is a sad fact of life that development values in Hartlepool are not those experienced in more affluent areas of the south east. Viability assessments are required to ensure that the financial burdens on the scheme do not prevent the scheme from coming forward as a deliverable concept.

The developer has been actively trying to explore solutions to the highway infrastructure deficiencies experienced in Hartlepool over a two-year period – it is an ongoing and active situation. It is clear that these junctions are required to enable this application to progress. We therefore fully support the joint working that has taken place with the Council to arrive at a scheme which provides the necessary alleviation to the strategic highway network. We fully support the delivery of the above proposals and confirm that we are an active and supportive partner with the Council in seeking to make our fair contribution towards such very necessary highway infrastructure. We do however record that we have concerns that the development initially proposed, i.e. that of 2000 homes has been reduced to 1200 homes as mentioned above and as a result, the scheme cannot fund every single aspect of every financial burden that has been requested on Tunstall Homes.

We will continue to both support and work with the Council to identify the support that Tunstall Homes might be able to give to the Council's legitimate development aspirations and we will continue to work towards a situation where Tunstall Homes bear their fair share of the financial burden of infrastructure improvements. It is equally apparent that Tunstall Homes cannot afford to deliver all of the full cost of a scheme which is needed to rectify existing problems as well as improve the accessibility of a range of housing sites across Hartlepool, including that the subject of our application.



We will be pleased to assist further in any reasonable capacity should this be helpful to the Council.

Yours sincerely



Steve Barker BSc (Hons) MRTPI DMS
Managing Director
Prism Planning