

Hartlepool Local Plan Hearing Session - Opening Statement by the Council

26th September 2017

1. Welcome and Introduction

1.1 Good morning, I am Matthew King (BA (Hons) Town and Country Planning; MTP), the Planning Policy Team Leader for Hartlepool Borough Council. The Council would like to welcome to Hartlepool the Inspector, Mr David Spencer, and all of the other organisations and individuals who will attend the hearing sessions over the next three weeks.

1.2 I am pleased to have this opportunity to formally open the Examination in Public which will assess the soundness of the Hartlepool Local Plan. If the plan is found to be sound and is adopted by the Council in line with any modifications considered necessary by the Inspector, it will then replace the saved policies from the 2006 Hartlepool Local Plan.

2. The Development of the Local Plan

2.1 The plan has been developed over the period since early 2014 when the Council began the process of producing and, where necessary, refreshing the evidence base to support the development of a sound Local Plan. The plan has been developed in line with national guidance in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), the relevant Legislation and Regulations both on a national and European level.

2.2 The Council's Statement of Community Involvement has been accorded with at each stage in the preparation of the plan with wide ranging and extensive consultation undertaken at each stage including the specific consultation bodies, relevant authorities, and general consultation bodies as required by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended by the 2016 Regulations). Further information on the ongoing and meaningful dialogue and cooperation, including with our neighbouring authorities, is set out within the Council's Duty to Cooperate evidence, which illustrates that the Council has fulfilled its obligations as required by the Duty to Cooperate.

2.3 In May 2014 the Council published an Issues and Options document along with a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for consultation. A total of 45 representations were made at this stage. The views gathered at this stage were, alongside the evidence base which formulated over 2014 and 2015, used to influence the production of the Preferred Options Local Plan which was published for a period of 8 weeks consultation in May 2016. A total of 240 representations were made at this stage. Additional evidence was produced following this stage, notably in the form of a SHMA Addendum to take account of the 2014 Sub National Population Projections, to help inform the development of the Publication version of the Local Plan which was published for 8 weeks consultation in December 2016. A total of 2,043 representations were made at

this stage. Following each stage a Consultation Statement was produced to fully document the representations received and how they had been considered by the Council. The Regulation 22 Consultation Statement (HLP01/4) was published following the conclusion of the Publication Stage consultation.

- 2.4 It has been highly encouraging to see the level of interest in the Local Plan and to hear a wide range of views on how people and organisations believe Hartlepool should grow over the next 15 years. The Council believes it has produced a plan which, whilst ambitious and growth orientated, is also realistic and deliverable and will help to achieve the vision set out within the plan that:

“Hartlepool, by 2031, will be a more sustainable community having achieved the substantial implementation of its key regeneration areas as set out within the Hartlepool Vision; raised the quality and standard of living; increased job opportunities through developing a strong, diverse and thriving local economy which contributes positively to the sub-regional economy; maximised quality housing choices and health opportunities to meet, in full, the current and future needs of all residents. The built, historic and natural environment will have been protected, managed and enhanced, and will contribute to making Hartlepool a safe and attractive place to live, and an efficient and sustainable transport network will integrate its communities within the Tees Valley City Region and beyond. The town will have become a focal destination for visitors and investment.”

- 2.5 The plan has been developed around 17 objectives which stemmed from four main Themes within the Sustainable Community Strategy. Broadly speaking the objectives aim to grow the economy, create and strengthen communities (including meeting the housing needs over the plan period), protect and where possible enhance the natural and built environment (including mitigation where development may have a detrimental impact) and enable transport network improvements to allow the growth of the borough over the plan period.

- 2.6 It is considered that once adopted the Local Plan will provide certainty to the residents of Hartlepool, developers and organisations who operate within and outside of the borough as to how planning decisions will be made.

2.7 **Employment and the Economy**

Hartlepool sits within a wider economic area of the Tees Valley. During the preparation of the Local Plan, Tees Valley Unlimited starting work on a Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for the Tees Valley. The SEP seeks to create 25,000 net additional jobs over the next 10 years in the Tees Valley with an aim to help boost the employment rate and reduce unemployment across the five authorities. At the outset a piece of work was undertaken to look at the key sectors to help apportion where the jobs growth would occur. This work highlighted that 2900 jobs could be created within Hartlepool over the 10 year period giving an annual target of 290 which has then been extrapolated over the 15 year plan period to give a jobs target for the plan period of 4,350 jobs.

- 2.8 Whilst this is an ambitious target for future growth, the Council considers that it is a target that can be achieved given the diversity of the economy within Hartlepool, the

potential growth “super sectors” including process engineering, offshore / sub-sea engineering and energy including nuclear and the low carbon sector which includes waste processing and renewable energy and the ongoing successes that have been achieved within the Enterprise Zone in particularly at Queens Meadow which has been the most successful enterprise zone within the Tees Valley. The allocation of a Prestige Business Park at Wynyard will attract new international and national companies which will create jobs and enable the continued growth of the sustainable community at Wynyard.

2.9 Housing and Sustainable Communities

The plan has identified a range of housing sites across the borough to meet the objectively assessed need as set out within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Addendum (HLP06/1) and has, on top of the OAN, identified an ambitious, yet achievable housing requirement which links to the economic growth ambitions for the borough over the next fifteen years.

- 2.10 Once existing planning permissions have been taken into account, the plan has needed to allocate a range of new housing allocations, most significantly a strategic western expansion of the town at High Tunstall and Quarry Farm linked to the creation of a third high quality access from the A19 into the town. The plan also proposes housing allocations at Wynyard to complement existing development in that location and to help to create a sustainable community through the provision of a range of community facilities and employment opportunities. Small allocations within Hart and Elwick Villages are also proposed. The housing allocations will also play an important part in guiding the quality of these developments through setting criteria aimed at ensuring high quality design.

2.11 Natural and Built Environment

Hartlepool benefits from a range of both environmental and historic assets. A crucial role of the Local Plan is to ensure that these assets are protected and enhanced and that where new development may have an impact, these impacts are minimised and mitigated.

- 2.12 In order to assess the impact of proposed allocations on the environmental designations such as the Special Protection Area along the coastline, Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been an important and necessary element in the production of the plan. The production of the HRA has involved working closely with Natural England to ensure they are satisfied that the plan has been produced in a sound and legally compliant manner.
- 2.13 The Strategy for the Historic Environment (HLP09/1) assesses the impact of the proposed allocations on the historic environment in the borough and this has helped to ensure that Historic England are supportive of the Local Plan.

2.14 Infrastructure

There is a need for a variety of infrastructure improvements over the plan period to support the allocations within the plan. Without doubt the most important is the proposed new grade separated junction and bypass to the north of Elwick Village;

This improvement will create a third good quality and safe access to Hartlepool from the A19, addressing safety issues which currently exist at the Elwick and Dalton Piercy junctions, reducing traffic levels through Elwick Village and, as a result of dealing with the aforementioned issues, allowing housing growth to the west of Hartlepool.

- 2.15 Works on delivering this piece of infrastructure early in the plan period are well advanced and funding bids to the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) (for £10million) and the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) (£8m due to be submitted by the end of September) would fund the works, with a back up position of prudential borrowing by the Council and repayment through s106 payments, it is considered to be deliverable. Other road infrastructure improvements to support growth at Wynyard have also been shown to be viable and deliverable.
- 2.16 Other policies within the Plan will ensure that a range of other infrastructure including health, education and green infrastructure will also be delivered to help ensure the growth over the plan period is sustainable.

3. Recognising the Need for a Local Plan

- 3.1 Hartlepool is currently relying on saved policies from the 2006 Hartlepool Local Plan. Over the past few years, this has meant that the Council has relied heavily on the NPPF especially in the determination of housing applications that have come forward. The Council is keen to ensure a sound framework in which to determine applications and guide development to the appropriate locations and recognises the benefits of putting in place a sound and legally compliant Local Plan. The Government have expressed the importance of Local Authorities having in place an up-to-date Local Plan; this reflects guidance within the NPPF which emphasises that, in line with planning law, an up-to-date development plan is the starting point for decision making. The Government see Local Plans as crucial in order to help accelerate housing growth and the importance they attach to having an up-to-date plan in place is reflected in the intervention measures set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of July 2015 and in the provisions of the Planning and Housing Act 2016.

4. Introducing the Council Team

- 4.1 I would like to take the time to introduce to you the officers of the Planning Policy Team and other officers within the Council who have contributed to the development of the Local Plan and who will represent the Council over the next three weeks. Alongside myself, the following officers will present the Council's case:

Matthew Clifford (Ba (Hons) History MTP MRTPI); Senior Planning Policy Officer with 17 years of experience in Policy planning.

Fiona Riley (Ba(hons) Geography MA (Town and Country Planning – with Distinction Licentiate Member RTPI); Senior Planning Policy Officer who has worked in the Planning Policy Team for three years and prior to that worked within the Council's Regeneration team.

Helen Williams (Ba (hons) MSc MRTPI); Senior Planning Policy Officer who has worked in the team for over 10 years and with experience within Development Management prior to that.

Ryan Cowley (MPlan Licentiate Member RTPI); Planning Officer who has worked with the team over the past year with experience in Development Management prior to that.

Nomusa Malinga (MSc Town Planning MSc Geo-Information Science BSc Honours Agriculture); Planning and Information Officer who has worked within the Council's Planning Policy Team for 11 years.

Graham Megson (Ba (Hons) Geography MSc Ecology); The Council's Ecologist who has been with the Council for the past 2 years and has 35 years experience.

Jim Ferguson (Ba (Hons) MTP MRTPI); Planning and Development Manager with over 23 years experience in Development Management.

Andrew Carter (BSc (Hons) MSc PGCE MRTPI); Assistant Director and former Planning Services Manager who has worked for Hartlepool for over 10 years.

Peter Devlin (BSc (Hons), LLB (Hons), LLM (Hons), DMS); The Council's Chief Solicitor & Monitoring Officer and former Director of Planning Services in a District Council. Member of the Law Society's Planning Panel and a Legal Associate of the RTPI.

Mike Blair (Bsc (Hons) Civil Engineering); The Council's Transport and Infrastructure Manager who has worked for the Council for over 30 years

Peter Nixon (HNC Civil Engineering); Senior Traffic Technician with over 20 years experience

Steve Wilkie (degree level qualifications in Planning and Landscape Architecture. Member of the Landscape Institute); Landscape Architect Team Leader who has worked for the Council for over 15 years and benefits from a planning qualification as well.

Officers not present at this session, but who will play an important part in the Hearing sessions include;

Daniel James (BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI); Development Management Team Leader who has worked for the Council for the past two and a half years and previous to that in Development Management in Stockton Borough Council

Israr Hussain (Ba (Hons) Business Studies MSc); Economic Development Team Leader who has worked for the Council for over 15 years

Steven Carter (Msc Health Development and Environment); Health Improvement Practitioner with the Council

The Council will also be represented by our Barrister, Mr Gary Grant, and will also draw on the experience of Mr Michael Bullock of Arc 4 who has prepared the work on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Addendum and the recent Housing

and Economic Growth Topic Paper. Mr Steven McCloy from ARUP will also attend in relation to the Highways Modelling work in relation to the allocations at Wynyard.

5.0 Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1 The Council considers the Plan takes account of the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance and has been prepared and advertised in accordance with the statutory procedures associated with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004 as amended) and associated 2012 Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) regulations (as updated by the 2016 regulations). The Council consider the Plan has been positively prepared, is justified, is effective and is consistent with national policy.
- 5.2 However, it is recognised that some main and additional modifications are needed in order to ensure the plan can be found sound and legally compliant and there may be a need for further changes to the Main and Additional Modifications Documents and changes to the Proposals Map as the Examination progresses. The Council welcomes the way in which you have worked with the Council to date and we will work proactively with you over the next three weeks to agree any additional changes which are considered necessary for the plan to be found sound.
- 5.3 That Sir, concludes the Council's Opening Statement.