

Hartlepool Local Planning Framework Emerging Local Plan

Statement of Common Ground between Hartlepool BC, High Tunstall Homes and Highways England



October 2017



**This is a Statement of Common Ground produced and agreed by
the following parties:**

Hartlepool Borough Council

Highways England

High Tunstall Homes

**The statement has been signed on behalf of the above parties by
the following representatives:**

**Andrew Carter - Assistant Director Economic Growth and Regeneration
(Hartlepool Borough Council)**

Signature: 

Date: 3/10/17

Daniel Gaunt - Asset Manager, Yorkshire and North East (Highways England)

Signature: email approval provided in lieu of signature

Date: 3/10/17

Barry Miller – Director (High Tunstall Homes)

Signature: 

Date: 3/10/17

Hartlepool Local Plan Examination 2017

Submission on behalf of Hartlepool Borough Council, Highways England and Tunstall Homes Ltd

Statement of Common Ground: Transport and Highways

3 October 2017

Introduction

1. This Statement of Common Ground (SOCG) has been jointly prepared by Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC), Highways England (HE) and Tunstall Homes Ltd (TH) in support of the Hartlepool Local Plan proposed housing allocation (HSG5) on land to the west of Hartlepool at High Tunstall. It addresses transport and highway matters, to demonstrate that all issues that may affect the inclusion of the additional housing allocation can be fully addressed and delivered within the timescales of the Local Plan.
2. The Local Plan includes the allocation of approximately 1,200 additional dwellings, with associated infrastructure, over the plan period.
3. By way of background information, an application seeking outline planning permission for a residential development comprising up to 2,000 dwellings of up to 2½ storeys in height and including distributor road, local centre, amenity open space and structure planting on an area of land south of Elwick Road, High Tunstall, extending to some 118 hectares (291.5 acres) was originally submitted to HBC on 8th September 2014.
4. The application was registered as valid on 2nd October 2014, HBC ref: H/2014/0428. It was accompanied by a full range of relevant documentation including an Environmental Statement, Design and Access Statement, Planning Statement, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Viability Assessment and Transport Assessment (and these have been updated and revised since).
5. Originally it was proposed by the applicant to extend the proposed distributor road northwards to join the A179 at a new roundabout junction.
6. Following receipt of comments from HE and HBC in January 2015 TH agreed to reduce the number of proposed dwellings to 1200 and to include a site for a single form entry primary school within the development. At the same time the proposal to extend the distributor road northwards to the A179 was dropped and instead discussions with HE and HBC revolved around upgrading the northern Elwick junction with the A19 to a grade separated junction, closure of the southern Elwick junction together with the Dalton Piercy junction and the provision of a northern Elwick by-pass. An assessment of alternative options was undertaken

by HBC to ascertain how the proposal compared against other potential mitigation options. A map illustrating the options is included as Appendix 1 and the assessment of the options is included as Appendix 2 to illustrate that the proposals included within the Local Plan are the most appropriate and sustainable.

7. The masterplan went through a number of iterations and in December 2015 revision G of the masterplan was submitted to HBC, this showed the development of 1200 units with the Story homes/Tunstall Homes hybrid application development shown within it (Story/TH application validated 21st January 2015, HBC ref: H/2015/0551 - 208 units in total, 153 Story and 55HT). The reduced site area for the overall site was now some 79.73 hectares (197 acres).
8. Submission of the revised masterplan was followed by the submission of a revised Planning Statement, Transport Assessment, Addendum to the Environmental Statement etc on 29th February 2016. At this time the application description was amended to read: residential development comprising up to 1,200 dwellings of up to 2. storeys in height and including distributor road, local centre, primary school, nursing/residential care home, amenity open space and structure planting.
9. The masterplan is now at revision P (plans submitted in August 2017) covering an increased area of 92ha to take account of additional land needed for Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) and shows a two form entry primary school as required by HBC but no nursing/residential care home, this having been deleted from the scheme in April 2016. A copy of the masterplan as it stands is already attached to TH's Matter 15 Response.
10. Over the last three years, therefore, TH has been working closely with HBC (as planning authority and local highway authority) and HE with the joint objective, so far as concerns highways and transportation matters, of identifying and assessing the highway and transport infrastructure necessary to allow the proposed allocation at High Tunstall to be fully developed.

Areas of Common Ground

Traffic Modelling and Mitigation

11. Transport assessment work has been undertaken to assess the cumulative impact of traffic as a result of the High Tunstall and Quarry Farm 2 developments. The modelling has demonstrated that the impact of the additional traffic would not be "severe", in the terms of NPPF paragraph 32, subject to appropriate mitigation works being implemented. These works include the provision of a by-pass around Elwick Village, a grade separated junction onto the A19, improvements to the A19 / A179 interchange and central reserve gap closures.
12. Separate modelling has been submitted jointly by the High Tunstall and Quarry Farm 2 developers, and agreed by HBC/HE to show that signalisation of the Sheraton Interchange (A19/A179 junction) by HE, together with the closure of at-grade junctions on the A19 will permit the build out of 428 properties (220 at Quarry Farm 2 and 208 at High Tunstall) in

advance of the provision of the by-pass and grade separated junction without causing a severe impact on either the strategic road network nor the local road network. This scenario is agreed to be a phase 1 of the overall highway works and is only acceptable on the proviso that the bypass and grade separated junction will follow as a phase 2 and will be in place by April 2020. (HT also submitted an assessment in July 2017 to show that some 600 properties could be accommodated in advance of the bypass and grade separated junction; but this has yet to be evaluated by HBC).

13. As identified in Table 2 of the LIP (page 19), the Wooler Road/Elwick Road/Park Road junction is currently operating in excess of practical capacity. To overcome existing capacity issues, and to accommodate the traffic from the Local Plan allocations, physical mitigation works at the Elwick Road/Park Road/Wooler Road junction have been identified and/or other junctions in the wider area. The exact form and timing of these works is under discussion between HBC and Tunstall Home Ltd.

Agreed: That the traffic modelling undertaken is considered to be up-to-date and to have been carried out in a manner which accords with the relevant standards and guidance. The assessments demonstrate that the transport networks, with the agreed mitigation, can accommodate traffic generated by the development proposals.

Timing and Funding of Required Mitigation

14. The improvements at the A19 / A179 interchange are programmed to commence in spring 2018 and the grade separated junction and Elwick bypass highway works are scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2020.
15. Highways England has indicated, subject to appropriate management and scheduling, that there do not appear to be any factors which would prevent the concurrent delivery of the highway works at Elwick, both the bypass and the proposed interchange, and the works at the A19 / A689 interchange to the east of Wynyard. Similarly, it is realistic based on current plans for these works to be delivered in advance of the A19 Norton to Wynyard widening scheme commencing in 2020.
16. A number of funding options are being explored by HBC at the present time. A bid for £10 million has been submitted to the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) for 2018-19 and a decision on this is expected later in the year, possibly in the Autumn Statement. The Council has also submitted a further funding application to the Housing Investment Fund funded by DCLG via the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for another £8 million. Both of these schemes are grant funding, and if successful, do not need to be repaid. A decision by the HBC's full Council meeting, on the 28th September 2017, has agreed that, as a back-up position, any funding shortfall will be prudentially borrowed by the Council to ensure that the works are completed by 2020. If prudential borrowing is needed the costs of the works covered by the prudential borrowing would be recovered by way of Section 106 payments. The Council's Deliverability Risk Assessment (EX/HBC/64) has illustrated that, in the worst case scenario of no grant funding being secured, the developers of High Tunstall and Quarry Farm

2, along with sites at Elwick Village, Briarfields, Southbrooke Farm along with windfall schemes for an additional 13 dwellings (a total of 1500 homes) could repay the full £18million if necessary to ensure the scheme is deliverable. This does however have consequential impacts in terms of other elements, in particular the levels of affordable homes which can be delivered. It is noted that the proposed allocation at High Tunstall delivers part of the distributor road / western bypass.

Agreed: That the timing of the mitigation measures will ensure the early delivery of housing at High Tunstall , and appropriate funding options are available.

Cost for the Grade Separated Junction and Elwick Bypass

17. The cost of the works at Elwick Bypass and the interchange is estimated at £18 million, based on works commissioned by Highways England for the interchange and Council assessments of the cost as part of the detailed design of the works. The estimates include an appropriate contingency.

Agreed: That the cost estimates for the bypass and interchange are reasonable and contain the required contingencies.

Sustainability of the Site

18. It is considered that the scale of housing growth proposed at High Tunstall , adjacent to the existing built up area, offers a number of benefits including:
- The opportunity to provide a range of facilities and services within the development, including a primary school and a new local centre providing a range of retail and health services.
 - An increase in the number of internal and linked trips, thus reducing flows on the adjacent road network.
 - The opportunity to extend and enhance existing bus services in the area, as a result of the increase in potential demand, and additional cycle and pedestrian facilities.
 - Lower car ownership as a result of the high quality public transport service and the accessibility of amenities and community facilities.
 - Physical provision of part of the future western bypass of Hartlepool.
 - Significant green space, including the provision of SANGS.
 - A range of house types and styles which will address the need identified within the SHMA.
19. The site is reasonably well served by existing bus services, with local connections provided via bus services which stop on Elwick Road within acceptable walking distance of the site. The proposed development will be designed to capitalise on these existing bus services, ensuring that pedestrian connections to the bus stops are safe, convenient and direct - and take into consideration the needs of the elderly and mobility impaired - and formalised pedestrian crossings are present, granting safe access to the bus stops, in both directions. The existing bus services operating along Elwick Road provide a combined frequency of at least every 10 minutes, Monday to Friday daytime, and at least every 30 minutes during early mornings,

evenings and at the weekends. The services will be supported by the promotion of sustainable travel options through the implementation of travel planning measures.

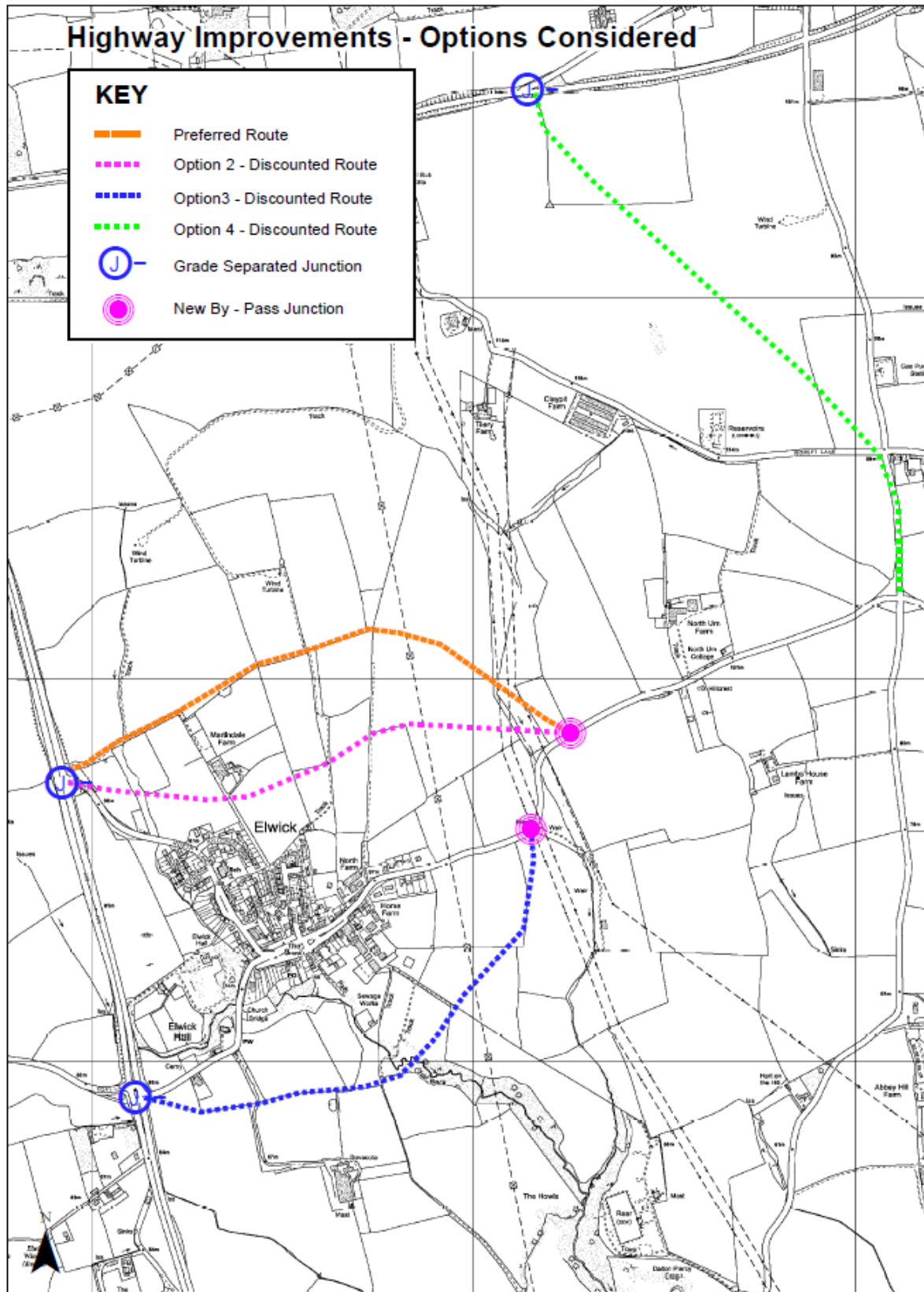
20. There is the potential for future bus services to enter and exit the site via the proposed vehicular access junctions from Elwick Road. The internal site layout would be designed to accommodate the circulation of full-sized bus services, ensuring that roads and junctions are of a suitable standard in terms of width and construction. Pedestrian connections to bus stops will also be direct and attractive.
21. Existing residents in the area will benefit from the range of facilities provided as a direct result of the development proposals. Future residents will also benefit from proximity to, for example, Ward Jackson Park, Summerhill Country Park, cricket ground, High Tunstall College of Science, etc.
22. It is considered that the location and scale of development accords with Paragraphs 34 and 35 of the NPPF. Paragraph 35 specifically states that *“Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people”*

Agreed: That the proposed allocations at High Tunstall are located in a sustainable location with the opportunity to protect and exploit opportunities for sustainable transport modes.

Areas of Disagreement

There are no areas of disagreement between the three parties in relation to Highways and infrastructure matters.

Appendix 1 – Map of alternative Highway Options Considered



Appendix 2

Options Considered in terms of Highway Improvements in the North West of Hartlepool

General Background

At present Hartlepool is highly reliant on the A689 and the A179 to provide access from the A19 into the town. There are other access points at present via Elwick and Dalton Piercy, however this relies on drivers making right hand turns into the villages when heading to Hartlepool from the south which is a dangerous manoeuvre over two lanes of 70mph traffic.

Given the safety concerns and the numbers of accidents and fatalities which have historically occurred at the Elwick junctions over recent years Highways England had obtained some funding to develop up some options to provide a grade separated junction at Elwick. However, at present, Highways England does not have any funding available to deliver the improvements and as there has not been a fatality for a number of years the cost benefit analysis of the works means it is not at the top of their priority list.

However, given the current reliance on the A689 and A179 these routes have seen noticeable increases in traffic congestion over the past 10-15 years. This congestion is now beginning to have an impact on the Elwick junctions where recently capacity issues have been identified where cars are queuing back in the deceleration lane on the A19 waiting to turn right and at times into the outside lane of the A19, therefore increasing the risk of a serious accident occurring. It is therefore proposed to develop a new bypass to the north of Elwick Village and create a new grade separated junction at the A19 at the northern Elwick access point.

The Council recognises the significant benefits that such major infrastructure works would result in; in effect this would create a third access into Hartlepool from the A19, helping to relieve pressure and congestion from the A689 and A179 and increasing highway capacity through allowing residents within the area to use this access point safely. It will also ensure that traffic safety is significantly improved at the Elwick junctions by removing the right hand turn manoeuvre from the junctions. The estimated costs of these works are between £14 and £18 million. A bid has been made to the Local Enterprise Partnership for £18 million of Local Growth Fund (LGF) money – if successful this money would be available to enable the works to

start to be implemented in 2017-8. The LGF money is in effect a loan and would then be repaid by the development as it develops over the plan period but would ensure the road is in place up front.

There have been ongoing meetings with the Highways Department and Highways England as we have been developing the plan and Highway England are aware of the proposals and supportive in principal subject to further work on the detailed design of the scheme.

Option 1 – Preferred Option

This option is considered the most appropriate way to deliver a bypass and grade separated junction. From the eastern end, the proposed new junction on Elwick Road will remove significant amounts of traffic movements around “devil’s elbow” as the route will then only be used by village traffic. The proposed route has been aligned so as to minimise the impacts on the farmer’s fields and loops round to the northern access on the A19 at Elwick. This is the preferred junction on the A19 to improve given that it is easier and likely significantly cheaper to provide a link road from the new grade separated junction into the village. This option of a bypass will take significant volumes of traffic out of the village making it a safer environment for the residents of Elwick. As previously mentioned it will also provide a safe and effective third access point from the A19 into and out of Hartlepool.

Option 2 – Discounted

This option still would have involved a new grade separated junction on the A19 northern access at the same cost of the Preferred Option above. The route of the bypass differed slightly and came closer to the village and to the south of Martindale Farm but joined Elwick Road at the same point of the Preferred Option.

The reasons this option was discounted included the fact that if the bypass went to the south of Martindale Farm it would cut off the farm access which leads to the south and through the village. This would therefore likely require the creation of a bridge or underpass at significant cost.

Another reason this option was discounted was due to the fact the route would have brought the bypass significantly closer to the village and therefore created more of

an impact in terms of noise and disturbance to the homes along the northern edge of the village.

The proposed route of the bypass would also have caused significantly more disturbance to the farmers fields in terms of dissecting a greater number of fields and this was something that was considered should be avoided.

Option 3 – Discounted

This option would have created a new junction at the southern end of “devil’s elbow” or slightly further towards Elwick Village for a bypass to run to the south of the village and join with a new grade separated junction at the southern Elwick junction with the A19.

There were a number of significant concerns with this option which ultimately resulted in it being discounted from consideration.

The main concern is that any improvement to the southern Elwick junction on the A19 will then need to provide an access for residents of Elwick into the village linking up with Church Bank. This is an extremely narrow steep road leading into the village from the south. The road currently has retaining walls on both sides and is, at points, impossible for two vehicles to pass. Even if there was land available to do works to widen this road this would be at significant cost and may not even be deemed acceptable as it falls within the Elwick Village conservation area.

The land levels to the south of the village were considered significantly more problematic as the land falls away from the road around the south of the village and would involve the bypass having to pass through environmentally sensitive areas of the countryside at Char Beck and possibly the Howls. These areas are both protected by policies within the emerging Hartlepool Local Plan 2016 due to their environmental and ecological importance. Crossing the beck would result in additional costs to the scheme by means of a bridge and could ultimately still have an environmental impact which was deemed inappropriate by means of additional pollution from run off such as salt from the roads into the water course.

Option 4 – Discounted

This option would have created a new road running north from the Elwick Road / Dalton Back Lane junction northbound towards the A179 at the northern Hart access. This would have enabled traffic from the West Park and Naisberry Estates and those nearby estates with an alternative access to the A179.

This proposal however would not have delivered any improvements at the Elwick junctions which was seen as a major concern as the safety issues and more recently the capacity issues with those junctions have been identified.

This option would not have resulted in the strategic highway improvement of a third safe access point into Hartlepool and would have only increased congestion on the A179 and was therefore quickly discounted.