

EXAMINATION OF DARLINGTON LOCAL PLAN
BANKS PROPERTY RESPONSES TO INSPECTOR'S NOTE 4:
MATTER 1. LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS AND OTHER
GENERAL MATTERS

FILE NOTE

LP/NE/3915/PL-2

1 Matter 1. Legal and Procedural Requirements and other General Matters

Viability

Q.1.14 Is the Plan informed by a proportionate and up to date assessment of viability that takes into account all relevant policies, and local and national standards?

The Local Plan Viability Assessment has been prepared by using a proportionate and up to date assessment of viability taking into account all relevant policies and local and national standards.

It should be noted that it is a high-level assessment that includes a series of assumptions regarding land values, build costs and developer contributions. In particular, table 8 of the Local Plan Viability Assessment (CD08) includes allowances of £2,400 per dwelling for education and £2,000 per dwelling for Highways and offsite infrastructure. The notes in table 8 state that these costs have been derived based on an analysis of past Section 106 provision and likely costs to deliver highways projects set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The estimated costs of highways improvement schemes included in the IDP include wide ranges and assign a number of potential sources of funding including Tees Valley Combined Authority and national government funding in addition to developer contributions.

Therefore, the assumptions that feed into the viability assessments are broad brush and likely to vary site by site. It will only be at the planning application stage that such costs will be able to be accurately defined. There are also likely to be applications where the delivery of strategic works are undertaken in lieu of such contributions.

Whilst we broadly support the viability assessments that have been undertaken, it is important to note that there are likely to be some variances once applications are considered in detail, albeit we believe that both our proposed housing allocations at Beaumont Hill (part of site 251) and Beech Crescent East (site 95) will be viable housing sites.

Q.1.15 Does the viability evidence demonstrate that the policies in the Plan are realistic, and that the cumulative cost of all relevant policies will not undermine the deliverability of the Plan?

With regard to the western part of Skerningham, site ref 251 (referred to by Banks Property as Beaumont Hill), the broad assumptions and policy requirements set out in scenario B10 (urban extension 500 units) in appendix B of the Local Plan Viability Assessment (CD08) establishes that the policy requirements set out in the local plan will not undermine the deliverability of the site. Whilst there are a number of high-level assumptions included in the testing, Banks Property

believe the site can be delivered in its entirety within the Plan period and that it can be viably developed taking cognisance of infrastructure requirements and emerging policy requirements.

Banks Property have worked closely with other main developers within the Skerningham strategic allocation, have fed into the wider proposals set out within the Masterplan Framework illustrated in figure 6.1 of the Proposed Submission Local Plan (core document 01) and support the Skerningham strategic allocation.

There are a number of references to a site-specific viability assessment being prepared for the Skerningham Strategic Allocation in CD08 and the council's response to PQ44.1 (Inspectors note 3). However, Banks Property have not been consulted regarding a site-specific viability assessment for Skerningham and have not seen any such assessment.

As set out in our representations to the Proposed Submission Local Plan (core document 01), Banks Property believe that land at Beaumont Hill should be allocated as a stand-alone housing proposal. This is further supported by the viability assessment work which confirms that as a site considered in scenario B10 in a medium value area, our Beaumont Hill site is a viable housing site when assessed as an urban extension.

J Seabury
26 April 2021