

April 2021



Darlington Local Plan Examination

Stage 1 Hearings

Matter 2

Amount of development needed in the Borough

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On behalf of

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1. Response to Matter 2

Household growth and housing requirements (policy H1)

Question: Q2.3. Are (a) the minimum requirement of 422 net additional dwellings per year and (b) the target of 492 net additional dwellings per year between 2016 and 2036 justified, positively prepared and consistent with national policy?

Question: Q2.4. Is expressing the housing requirement as a range clear and unambiguous, and does the plan clearly establish a housing requirement figure for the Borough for the Plan period as required by national policy?

- 1.1 We support the Council's higher proposed housing target of 492 net dwellings per annum in the Draft Plan which includes an uplift to support economic growth aspirations.
- 1.2 This target figure is based on 2017 SHMA evidence and is justified rather than the lower 422 dwelling figure provided in the range. To align with conclusions of the 2017 SHMA, we consider that rather than providing a housing requirement range as set out in Policy H1, the Draft Plan should make the 492 net dwellings per annum a minimum housing requirement to be clear and unambiguous as required by national policy.
- 1.3 In alignment with this, the Council's five year housing land supply position must also be clearly tested against the revised minimum housing requirement of 492 net dwellings per annum. It is currently not clear from Policy H1 what the starting point for determining the five year requirement is.
- 1.4 Assessing the housing land supply position against a minimum housing requirement of 492 net dwellings per annum would be a positive approach, ensuring that housing needs are met in full and the Council's economic growth aspirations are supported by sufficient housing. In this regard the approach is justified in accordance with the NPPF.
- 1.5 It is important to highlight that there is a significant amount of current inward investment in Darlington. The Government recently announced in March 2021 that they would be developing a new Treasury campus in Darlington¹. The site will initially employ 750 officials with plans for future expansion and is expected to open before the end of 2024².
- 1.6 Additionally, Teesside International Airport which is located just outside of Darlington is set to undergo significant expansion.
- 1.7 Terminal refurbishment plans were announced in December 2020 and on the 3rd March 2021, the Tees Valley region including the Airport was awarded Freeport status by the

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/mar/03/darlington-named-as-site-of-planned-treasury-northern-campus>

² <https://www.itv.com/news/tyne-tees/2021-03-03/sunak-announces-darlington-as-location-for-treasurys-northern-headquarters-and-confirms-teesside-freeport>

Government which is expected to yield long term economic benefits for the Airport³. The Teesside Freeport is expected to create more than 18,000 jobs and provide a £3.2billion boost to the local economy over the next five years.

- 1.8 This significant amount of planned inward investment and relocation of staff in the Treasury to Darlington will inevitably create greater demand for a wide range and balance of housing types and locations throughout Darlington Borough to meet the planned growth.
- 1.9 The Draft Plan must accurately assess the housing needs for Darlington throughout the Plan Period and ensure the Council's economic growth aspirations are supported by providing sufficient housing in the right locations.

³ <https://teesvalley-ca.gov.uk/teesside-freeport/>