
Inspector's Matters Issues and Questions

Examination of the Darlington Local Plan

Part 1 Hearings (Matter 3)



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Introduction

Savills (UK) Limited have been instructed on behalf of our client, Bussey & Armstrong Limited, who are longstanding developers within the Borough, to submit a response to the Examination of the Darlington Local Plan: Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions.

Our client's interest is in respect of the West Park Garden Village which is located north west of Darlington and is located within the jurisdiction of Darlington Borough Council.

This Statement should be read in conjunction with all previous representations made on behalf of Bussey & Armstrong Limited.

These representations have been submitted to support the proposed residential allocation of land adjacent to the north of West Park Garden Village and to provide comments on the general approach and strategy of the plan relating to matters on housing requirement, allocations, Development Limits and others.

Our client is committed to ensuring the emerging Local Plan is prepared on a sound and robust basis. In particular, they wish to ensure that the correct provision of housing and housing allocations are provided throughout the plan period to meet the social and economic needs of the Borough.

Our comments therefore focus on the following Matters:

- Matter 2: Amount of development needed in the Borough
- Matter 3: Vision, aims, objectives and spatial strategy
- Matter 4: Housing development
- Matter 5: Meeting particular housing needs

This statement addresses a number of questions raised by the Inspector under Matter 3: Vision, aims, objectives and spatial strategy.

Matter 3: Vision, aims, objectives and spatial strategy

Presumption in favour of sustainable development (policy SD1)

SQ3.1. Subject to the Council's proposed modification, is policy SD1 consistent with national policy and would it be effective in helping decision makers know how to react to development proposals?

Subject to the Council's proposed modification, we support the proposed changes to Policy SD 1 as it is considered these changes now align the policy text with the requirements set out at paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework and the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Settlement hierarchy (policy SH1) and the distribution of housing and employment development allocations

Q3.2. Is the settlement hierarchy set out in policy SH1 based on evidence that is relevant, up to date, adequate and proportionate? Is the hierarchy and associated broad distribution of development reasonable, having regard to alternatives that were considered during the preparation of the Plan and the findings of the sustainability appraisal?

We fully support the Darlington Urban Area being the focus of future development within the Borough as Darlington is the main urban town in the Borough providing a strong opportunity for sustainable future growth.

The settlement hierarchy set out in policy SH1 is a continuation of previous spatial strategies established within the adopted Core Strategy (2011) and Local Plan (1997) as noted in the Spatial Distribution of Development Topic Paper. However, most notably it is reflective of the justified approach documented within the Council's Sustainability Appraisal (SA).

Our Client supports the Council's conclusions with regard to growth in the urban fringe of the Borough and particularly in North West Darlington.

Q3.3. Is the broad distribution of housing and employment development proposed through commitments and allocations in the Plan consistent with the settlement hierarchy set out in policy SH1?

The allocations in the plan are reflective of the Settlement Hierarchy (as justified within the SA) with the strategic growth comprising the infilling or extension of the existing settlement of Darlington.

Our Client considers that the allocation of their Site at West Park Garden Village (WPGV) 'North' would provide greater flexibility, ensuring that the housing need and demand for the Borough is met. Please see our comments to Matter 2 for further detail on the amount of development needed in the Borough and Matter 4 for further detail on HELAA Site 390 'WPGV North'.

Development limits

Q3.4. Are the development limits to the Darlington urban area, three service villages, and eight rural villages defined on the policies map based on evidence that is relevant, up to date, adequate and proportionate?

With specific reference to the development limits in North West Darlington (as shown on the PDLP proposals map), yes, it is considered that the development limits to the Darlington urban area and its surrounding villages is based on up to date evidence.

Our Client supports the inclusion of the land at WPGV 'North' (HELAA Site 390) within the identified development limits. We consider the inclusion of the land is clearly justified and therefore sound as it forms a logical 'rounding off' to the extent of built development proposed by WPGV and Greater Faverdale, having clear sustainability benefits.

The proposed development limits reflect the boundary of previously allocated land and the main built form of the settlement as established within the currently adopted Development Plan (Local Plan and Core Strategy). The development limits here continues to respond to natural physical boundaries such as the A1 to the west, with established development to the south.

We fully support the development limits in North West Darlington, as the identification of Site 390 within the Development Limits would allow for the Site to come forward as 'windfall' development, subject to the proposals accordance with other relevant policies, which would contribute towards meeting the net minimum housing requirement within the plan period. However, it is considered that Site 390 should be allocated for residential development in response to our comments to Matter 4 and our comments to policy H2 in the proposed submission draft consultation as advocated.

The Site lies on the north western edge of Darlington, as it stands, adjacent to the northern edge of the wider West Park Garden Village development and is approximately 4 hectares in size, capable of accommodating approximately 120 dwellings. The Site comprises open agricultural land and contains no physical features or structures with the exception of some boundary vegetation and trees. The Site is bound by the A1(M) to the north-west and the A68 West Auckland Road to the north-east. The Site can be accessed via estate roads within West Park Garden Village to the south and there are a number of bus services operating throughout the wider development, with the nearest approx. 450m from the Site on Edward Pease Way. The Site also has strong pedestrian and cycle path connections to the surrounding area. Due to its island like status, it forms a logical site for development and therefore allocation for residential use for clarity and certainty within the Local Plan and is associated Policies Map. Please see our comments to Matter 4 for further detail.