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## Examination of the Darlington Local Plan

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### **INSPECTOR'S NOTE NO. 10: ACTION POINTS FOLLOWING WEEK ONE HEARINGS**

#### **Introduction**

Further to the discussions at the week one hearing sessions, the following actions are required. I consider these to be necessary at this stage of the examination to inform my consideration of whether the Plan is sound and/or how it could be made sound by main modifications. I may decide in due course that other or different main modifications are required, including to the parts of the Plan that I refer to below.

Responses should be submitted to the Programme Officer by **midday on Wednesday 9 June 2021** unless otherwise specified.

#### **M1: Legal and procedural requirements and other general matters**

##### **Supplementary Planning Documents, and other documents that are not part of the statutory development plan**

**AP1.** Council to ensure that its proposed main modifications to policies DC1, DC2, H4, H8, ENV3 and ENV5 (and any other policies and/or reasoned justification) include appropriate reference to Supplementary Planning Documents and other documents that are not part of the statutory development plan. For example, by requiring proposals "to have regard to" the relevant document, and clarifying whether it exists or is proposed to be updated or prepared.

##### **Neighbourhood Plans**

**AP2.** Council to ensure that its proposed main modification to the reasoned justification to policy H2 clearly explains the housing figures for

the five designated neighbourhood areas in Table 6.1. This should explain that they are the number of dwellings that are expected to be built on commitments and allocations between 2021 and 2036. It could also clarify whether or not there would be any expectation that development would be allowed on non-allocated sites in the neighbourhood area if monitoring indicated that the committed and allocated sites were not delivering the number of homes stated in Table 6.1.

## **Viability**

**AP3.** Council to prepare an addendum to the *Local Plan Viability Assessment* [CD08] to:

- (a) Set out the Benchmark Land Values in Table 9 in £ per hectare (rather than £ per acre).
- (b) Set out what the Existing Use Values referred to in Table 9 are in £ per hectare, and the evidence on which they are based.
- (c) Clarify that the Benchmark Land Values in Table 9 relate to gross site areas. Or, if that is not the case, explain why they should relate to net developable area bearing in mind that they are intended to reflect the Existing Use Value with a sufficient uplift to incentivise willing owners to sell the whole of the site. If the Benchmark Land Values are intended to relate to net developable area, clarification would also have to be provided about how they are intended to be used consistently in terms of comparing Residual Land Values for the site typologies in Table 1, and for any specific sites.
- (d) Include a revised version of Table 10 in CD08 (*summary of residential viability testing*) that includes (for each red, amber and green viability rating) figures to quantify (in percentage terms and £ per hectare) the difference (plus or minus) between the Residual Land Value and the Benchmark Land Value.

## **M2: Amount of development needed in the Borough**

### **Economic growth and employment land requirement**

**AP4.** Council to prepare a main modification to the Plan to refer to the number of jobs that existed in the Borough in 2016, and to clarify that the aim of facilitating the growth of 7,000 new jobs refers to net job growth between 2016 and 2036.

**AP5.** Council to prepare a main modification to the Plan to provide additional reasoned justification for the proposals in policies E1 and E2 to provide for a total of 158 hectares (net) of additional land for employment

uses. This could refer to previous rates of take up of employment land; evidence of future demand for industrial and storage / distribution uses; and the need to provide flexibility and a choice of sites to ensure that expected and unanticipated development needs can be met. It could also clarify that whilst many of the 7,000 net additional jobs expected in the Borough are likely to be accommodated in the town centre and in other existing built up areas, the employment land allocations are considered to be sufficient to meet the need for additional floorspace for industrial and storage / distribution uses.

### **Household growth and housing requirements**

**AP6.** I have not yet reached a final conclusion about whether or not expressing the housing requirement as a range in policy H1 is justified and would be effective. However, as I may conclude that is not the case, the Council is requested to prepare a potential main modification to policy H1 so that it expresses the housing requirement as a single minimum net figure for the period 2016 to 2036 along with the expected annual rate of delivery. This will be discussed at the matter 4 hearing session.

### **M3: Vision, aims, objectives and spatial strategy**

#### **Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development**

**AP7.** Council to amend its proposed main modification to policy SD1 so that it replicates the wording of NPPF paragraph 11 parts (c) and (d). Consideration could be given to defining what the “development plan” is in the Borough, for example through use of a footnote.

#### **Development limits**

**AP8.** Council to consider whether any further amendments<sup>1</sup> need to be made to the development limits identified on the Policies Map in the context of the methodology described in Appendix 3 to the *Spatial Distribution of Development Topic Paper* and having regard to the latest information about housing completions and commitments as at 1 April 2021; the *Middleton St George Neighbourhood Plan* submitted to the Council in April 2021 [OTH2]; and any other relevant evidence in the examination library that has become available since the proposed submission Plan was prepared in 2020.

*William Fieldhouse*

27 May 2021

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<sup>1</sup> Further amendments to those proposed in DBC4 which includes amendments to the development limits for Low Coniscliffe and Merrybent villages.