



Examination of the Darlington Local Plan

Inspector: William Fieldhouse

Programme Officer: Liz Sheard

Tel: 01325 406656

Email: programmeofficer@darlington.gov.uk

Address: Darlington Town Hall, Feethams, Darlington DL1 5QT

Examination webpage: www.darlington.gov.uk/local-plan-exam

INSPECTOR'S NOTE NO. 13: FURTHER SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSES TO ACTION POINTS

Introduction

I have now considered all of the Council's responses to my Action Points relating to the matters discussed at the hearing sessions held between 25 May and 24 June 2021¹, along with all of the other evidence before me.

I have decided that a further hearing session is required to allow me to fully examine some of the Council's responses and proposed main modifications. The further hearing session will be held using Microsoft Teams starting at **9.30 on Tuesday 7 September 2021**. The Further Supplementary Questions set out below will be considered at that session, in so far as I consider that to be necessary once I have considered written responses to them.

All participants who were invited to the relevant hearing sessions under matters 4, 7, 9 and 10 in May and June may participate at the further hearing session. If any other representor that made objections to relevant parts of the Plan in response to the regulation 19 consultation wishes to participate they should notify the Programme Officer by **midday on Friday 13 August 2021**.

Written statements in response to the Further Supplementary Questions must be no longer than 3,000 words in total and be received by the Programme Officer by **midday on Friday 13 August 2021**.

Statements should be prepared in accordance with the advice set out in IN4 Annex 1 published on 1 April 2021.

¹ DBC11, DBC16 and DBC17.

M4: Housing development

Policy H2: Housing supply

The Council's response to AP12 summarises the housing land supply identified in the Plan for the period 2016 to 2036. This identifies a total of 11,579 dwellings of which 3,119 are assumed to be built on sites that had planning permission on 1 April 2021.

The Council's response to AP13 summarises the five year housing land supply identified in the Plan for the period 2021 to 2026. This identifies a total of 2,920 dwellings of which 1,670 are assumed to be built on sites that had planning permission on 1 April 2021.

The Council's response to AP14 gives an indication of the number of dwellings that were granted planning permission but were subsequently not built before the permission expired between 2016 and 2021. This suggests an average lapse rate of around 14% for that five year period, although the figures for individual years varied from around 2% to over 50%.

APFSQ1. Does the Council's response to AP14 about the number of planning permissions that have lapsed mean that any of the assumptions about housing land supply as set out in the Council's responses to (a) AP12 (plan period 2016 to 2036) or (b) AP13 (five year supply 2021 to 2026) need to be changed?

Policy H10: Skerningham housing allocation

The Council's responses to AP22 and AP24 (and Appendices A and F) propose main modifications to policy H10, the reasoned justification and the Skerningham masterplan framework (figure 6.1).

The Council's response to AP23 includes indicative plans (showing how the Skerningham site could be developed if the existing golf club remained in its current location (Appendix D) and if it were to be relocated (Appendix E). The response to AP23 advises that the Council considers either option to be in accordance with policy H10 (subject to its proposed main modifications).

The Council's responses to AP22 and AP52 propose changes to the policies map to show revised "rural gaps" between Darlington and the villages of Barmpton and Great Burdon.

APFSQ2. Would the Council's proposed main modifications to policy H10, reasoned justification and masterplan framework (figure 6.1), along with the proposed changes to the policies map, ensure that the Plan is sound

with regard to the development of the Skerningham housing allocation?
In particular whether:

- a) The key principles set out in policy H10 and proposed approach to the preparation of a design code and comprehensive masterplan, along with associated community consultation, would be effective in securing high quality development that reflects local aspirations in accordance with national policy relating to good design².
- b) Policy H10 (including the requirements relating to an infrastructure phasing plan; review mechanism prior to the occupation of the 1,650th dwelling; schools and other community facilities (parts b and d); off-site highway works (part f); local distributor road (part g); and green infrastructure (part j)) would be effective in securing the provision of all necessary infrastructure in a timely manner that is appropriately coordinated with the housing development up to and after 2036.
- c) The proposal for up to 4,500 dwellings and associated transport, community and green infrastructure could be viably delivered without the relocation of the golf course. If necessary, the viability evidence provided by the Council and Skerningham Estates Limited should be updated to inform consideration of this question.

Housing allocation ref 20: Great Burdon

The Council's response to AP52 proposes changes to the policies map to amend the extent of the green wedge of Haughton / Red Hall referred to in policy ENV3 part A(2), and to define the rural gap between Darlington and Great Burdon referred to in policy ENV3 part A(1). The Council's response to AP53 proposes a main modification to the housing allocation statement for site ref 20 Great Burdon aimed at securing an appropriately landscaped boundary with the rural gap and retaining the openness and green infrastructure functions of the green wedge.

APFSQ3. Would the Council's proposed main modification to the housing allocation statement for site ref 20 Great Burdon, along with the proposed changes to the policies map, ensure that the Plan would be effective in securing an appropriately landscaped boundary with the rural gap and retaining the openness and green infrastructure functions of the green wedge?

² NPPF section 12.

M7: Economic development

Policies H11 and E2: Greater Faverdale housing and employment allocation

The Council's response to AP31 (and Appendices A and B) propose main modifications to policy H11, the reasoned justification, and the Greater Faverdale masterplan framework (figure 6.2).

The Council's response to AP32 proposes a main modification to policy E2 table 7.3 to clarify that the development proposed on the 70 hectares (gross) / 49 hectares (net) of employment land at Greater Faverdale is for uses within classes E(g), B2 and B8.

APFSQ4. Would the Council's proposed main modifications to policy H11, reasoned justification, masterplan framework (figure 6.2) and policy E2 table 7.3 ensure that the Plan is sound with regard to the development of the Greater Faverdale housing and employment allocation? In particular whether:

- a) The key principles set out in policy H11 and proposed approach to the preparation of a comprehensive masterplan, informed by community consultation and the existing Greater Faverdale Design Code³, would be effective in securing high quality development that reflects local aspirations in accordance with national policy relating to good design⁴.
- b) Policy H11 (including the requirements relating to an infrastructure phasing plan; review mechanism prior to the occupation of the 750th dwelling or development exceeding 24 hectares (net) of employment land; a school and other community facilities (part c); a link road (part f); off-site highway works (part g); and green infrastructure (part j)) would be effective in securing the provision of all necessary infrastructure in a timely manner that is appropriately coordinated with the housing and employment development up to and after 2036.

M9: Transport and other infrastructure

Policy IN1: Specific priorities for the road network

The Council's response to AP41 proposes a main modification to paragraphs 10.5.10 and 10.5.11 to provide reasoned justification for the new road and public transport links listed in policy IN1 part C(vii). The reasoned justification would include a map (Figure 10.2) showing the links, and a list of 8 schemes from west to east.

³ DBC18.

⁴ NPPF section 12.

APFSQ5. Should policy IN1 part C(vii) be modified so that it is consistent with the list of schemes as proposed by the Council in the modified reasoned justification and map (Figure 10.2)?

Policies IN2 and IN4: Cycling and walking infrastructure

The Council's response to AP45 proposes a main modification to policy IN2(b) aimed at ensuring that all new neighbourhoods provide high quality, safe and easily accessible walking and cycling routes to important local services such as shops, schools, primary health care, leisure, and employment opportunities.

The Council's response to AP48 proposes a main modification to policy IN4 relating to the provision of cycle storage and changing / showering facilities in development, including reference to "the *Tees Valley Highway Design Guide* or any successor". The response advises that details of cycle storage spaces will be set out in an update of the *Tees Valley Highway Design Guide* due to be published December 2021, and that in the interim period the Council will rely on the national standards set out in table 11.1 of *LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design*.

APFSQ6. Would the Council's proposed main modifications to policies IN2(b) and IN4, along with other relevant policies in the Plan, set out a sound approach to the provision of cycling and walking infrastructure in new developments? Should policy IN4, or the reasoned justification, state that details of cycle storage spaces will be set out in the update of the *Tees Valley Highway Design Guide* due to be published December 2021, and that in the interim period the Council will rely on the national standards set out in table 11.1 of *LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design*?

M10: Other strategic and development management policies

Policy ENV3(A): Rural gaps

The Council's response to AP52 proposes changes to the policies map to define the rural gaps referred to in policy ENV3 part A(1).

APFSQ7. Would the Council's proposed changes to the policies map ensure that policy ENV3 part A(1) is effective in retaining the openness and green infrastructure functions of the rural gaps between Middleton St George and Middleton One Row; Middleton St George and Oak Tree; Hurworth on Tees and Hurworth Place; and Darlington and the villages of Great Burdon and Barmpton?

Policies ENV3(B) and ENV4(a) and (b): Green corridors

The Council's responses to AP55 and AP56 propose main modifications to policies ENV3 and ENV4, associated reasoned justification, and the policies map aimed at clarifying the requirements relating to existing and proposed green corridors.

APFSQ8. Would the Council's proposed main modifications to policies ENV3 and ENV4, associated reasoned justification, and the policies map ensure that the requirements relating to existing and proposed green corridors are sound?

Policy ENV5: Green infrastructure standards

The Council's response to AP57 proposes a main modification to policy ENV5 to clarify the requirements relating to the provision of green infrastructure on developments of 20 dwellings (0.2 hectares) or more, or non-residential developments of 1,000sqm gross floorspace or more, and developments of between 11 and 19 dwellings (0.1 to 0.2 hectares) or non-residential developments of 500sqm to 1,000sqm gross floorspace.

APFSQ9. Would the Council's proposed main modification to policy ENV5 ensure a sound approach to the provision of green infrastructure for developments of (a) 20 dwellings (0.2 hectares) or more, or non-residential developments of 1,000sqm gross floorspace or more, and (b) between 11 and 19 dwellings (0.1 to 0.2 hectares) or non-residential developments of 500sqm to 1,000sqm gross floorspace?

William Fieldhouse

19 July 2021