

Statement by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Planning

23 February 2021

Local Plan

The Planning Inspectors for the Local Plan have issued a post-hearing letter to the Council following the conclusion of the examination hearing sessions in November 2020. This refers to the preparation of additional evidence and their initial findings on soundness matters. The letter has been published on the Council's examination website.

Additional Evidence

The additional evidence required relates to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Addendum to appraise the scale and distribution of employment land proposed in the Plan, having particular regard to the location of strategic sites, and an update to the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTAA) with the associated Site Capacity Study. Both pieces of work are nearing completion.

An additional six-week consultation exercise on this new evidence, the latest Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) and an update note on housing requirements relative to economic activity rates, will be commenced in February 2021. Following this there will be a further hearing session after which Main Modifications will be prepared for consideration by Cabinet and Council.

Soundness Matters

The Inspectors have advised that the proposed draft land allocation site for 30 dwellings at Skottowe Crescent, Great Ayton (GTA 1), should be deleted from the Plan due to the impact on the setting of the Grade I listed Church of all Saints and the Grade II* listed Ayton Hall.

They also consider that the proposed inclusion of 10 hectares of "safeguarded land" for the future should be deleted from the employment allocation at Leeming Bar (LEB3) given the amount of other employment land already proposed in the Plan and that it is not inevitable the site would be required for this type of land use. In terms of the actual allocation itself, the Inspectors have invited the Council to consider alternative wording for the policy to secure an acceptable relationship between the commercial development and the nearby residential area.

The other draft allocation of concern to the Inspectors is the Bedale Car and Coach Park (AIB3) due to the deliverability of the site within the plan period, and therefore the effectiveness of the allocation, together with the impact on the open character and appearance of the site and the relationship with the setting of the Bedale Conservation Area. It is recommended that this allocation is therefore neither justified nor effective and should be deleted.

In addition to this advice on the aforementioned draft allocations, the letter invites the Council to give additional justification to show why Nationally Described Space Standards should remain in the Local Plan and Officers are currently preparing evidence on the importance of these standards to achieving good quality homes in Hambleton.

Local Plan Member Working Group

In order to properly consider these potential changes, and the accommodation of any amendments in the schedule of Main Modifications, meetings of the Local Plan Member Working Group are to be resumed promptly.

Ingleby Arncliffe Neighbourhood Plan

The emerging Ingleby Arncliffe Neighbourhood Plan has taken a significant step forward as it has been publicised for consultation. Before it can be adopted it will require consideration by an Inspector and approval at referendum. The Council's social media is being used to promote the Ingleby Arncliffe Neighbourhood Plan process.

Development Management

The progress being made with the Council's Planning Policies is being accompanied by a rise in the submission of planning applications with the number received in excess of the corresponding figure for the previous year. This is in terms of both minor and major planning applications and the fee income for planning applications is set to be greater than the estimated budget for the financial year. It is anticipated that more major applications will be forthcoming prior to the end of March. The Planning Service has brought in additional staff and more resources are being sought to address this higher workload.

Housing

Adaptation works and applications for adaptations under the Disabled Facilities Grant have continued throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. To date 49 adaptations have been completed, and funding has been committed for 28 further schemes which are either underway or due to commence with 3 further applications pending approval. This means that Hambleton District Council has committed the full amount of the original DFG budget, £467,017, to be spent in year and this will be supported by an additional £50,000 of capital funding from the Council to meet demand of the statutory function. An additional Better Care Fund allocation of £64,248 announced in December has also been committed. The revised budget for the year is therefore £581,264 and it is anticipated that the target 85% spend will be achieved.

Councillor David Webster
Portfolio Holder for Planning