



Redcar & Cleveland Submission Local Plan April 2017

Sustainable Development Policies Topic Paper



1. Introduction

1.1. This paper provides the background to support a number of sustainable development policies within the Local Plan. The paper relates to the following policies:

- Policy SD2 Locational Policy
- Policy SD3 Development Limits
- Policy SD6 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

2. Policy SD2 Locational Policy

2.1. The Local Plan directs development to the most sustainable locations within the borough. Policy SD2 'Locational Policy' sets out the settlement hierarchy which will be used to guide development and inform allocations in the Local Plan. The majority of development (approximately 60%) will be focussed in the 'Urban and Coastal Area', which includes Greater Eston, Redcar, Marske and Saltburn.

2.2. This settlement hierarchy is similar to the Core Strategy (2007) (RC12/1), however the 'Conurbation Area' as the main focus of development has been replaced by the 'Urban Area' and 'Coastal Area', which also includes Saltburn. This change is to better reflect how local people see our areas, and also corresponds to other aspects of Council service delivery. Saltburn also has a good range of facilities and public transport connections, including the Darlington to Saltburn railway line. It is therefore considered that Saltburn sits comfortably within this 'Spatial Area'.

2.3. The Urban Area and Coastal Area are the main focus for employment and population within the borough and is where many local services, jobs, shops and public transport links are located. SD2 therefore sets an aim of achieving 60% of all new development within the Urban Area and Coastal Area in order to promote a sustainable pattern of development.

2.4. Within the 'Rural Area' development is directed towards Guisborough, reflecting its role as the principal 'Rural Service Centre' which the Plan aims to enhance by promoting businesses including the retail, leisure and tourism sectors, as well as a focus for new housing. Development is also focussed on the 'East Cleveland Towns' of Brotton, Loftus, and Skelton. In addition to Guisborough, these are the main rural settlements which have the best rural transport linkages, provide local shopping and community facilities and have individual functions that allow them to operate as a network of linked communities. Skelton Industrial Estate is the major employment location in the East Cleveland area, while Brotton contains the local primary care hospital and the main secondary school serving the area. Despite the existence of facilities including a leisure centre, primary schools and local shops, there is widespread recognition that Loftus is in decline and underperforming. Connectivity and infrastructure could also be improved. In addition to housing allocations a specific regeneration policy, REG 4, was added to the Publication Local Plan to support development and the regeneration of Loftus.

- 2.5. The Local Plan also includes housing allocations in two lower order settlements defined as ‘Service Villages’ within the settlement hierarchy. Despite their location towards the lower end of the hierarchy, it is considered that development would be sustainable and that justification exists for residential development at the Low Cragg Hall Farm site (H3.29) in Carlin How and the Abattoir Site and Adjacent Land (H3.30) at Boosbeck. Both sites have received planning permission and further detail to support their allocation is included in the housing evidence base.
- 2.6. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) (RC01/5/1) recommends including ‘Villages’ that could accommodate growth, due to provision of at least a minimal level of services, into the ‘Service Village’ tier and to restrict growth in all others to that which only serves a local role, removing the theoretical third tier (Villages with development limits) in order to clearly focus delivery on a sustainable strategy. The Council consider that there is a distinction between the existing Service Village and Village tiers, and it is therefore appropriate to maintain this within the hierarchy. The use of development limits is discussed under Policy SD3. The supporting text to SD2 also clarifies that development will be limited to that which meets specific identified local and rural needs.
- 2.7. The SA also recommends the Local Plan strategy could set out a clearer role and function for individual settlements (or smaller settlement groups). This would help identify what sustainability issues there are in each settlement that could be addressed, at least in part, through the Local Plan. Further detail in SD2 is not considered necessary as the roles of the settlements has been set out in the ‘Local Spatial Strategies’.
- 2.8. In preparing the Local Plan, priority has been given to accommodating new development on previously developed land and within existing settlements where possible. However, in order to provide sufficient deliverable sites to meet the identified housing need, it has been necessary to allocate the most sustainable sites on the edge of existing settlements. Proximity to public transport and local facilities was taken into consideration in allocating sites, with development directed towards the most sustainable and accessible locations, whilst ensuring the deliverability of sites. More detail on this process is included in the Housing Land Supply and Allocations Background Evidence Paper (RC06/04/2).

3. Policy SD3 Development Limits

- 3.1. Development limits have been identified on the Policies Map (RC01/2) to contain future development and to make a clear distinction between the urban area and the countryside. This approach helps to prevent uncontrolled urban sprawl and is considered critical in delivering sustainable development.
- 3.2. Development limits have been drawn around the borough’s main Urban Areas, Coastal Areas and some of the Rural settlements. The Development Limits Background Paper

(RC04/01) sets out how development limits have been reviewed from those previously included in Local Plan 1999/LDF Proposals Map 2007 (RC12/3).

- 3.3. The Sustainability Appraisal generally supports the use of development limits, although it recommends that when applied to 'Villages' within the settlement hierarchy, they should only be identified around those with a minimum level of services. Development limits are a long established principle in the Plan area and were reviewed in the preparation of the Local Plan. While development limits are identified around a number of smaller villages, there are relatively limited sites within these settlements which could come forward for development. Furthermore supporting text to Policy SD2 clarifies that development will be limited to that which meets specific identified local and rural needs. Development proposals will be required to be of an appropriate scale to the settlement in which it takes place, controlled by development limits. It is therefore considered appropriate to retain the development limits around Villages, and that this would not lead to unsustainable development. Where it is considered that further development would detrimentally affect the character of a village, development limits have not been set.
- 3.4. It is considered that the abolishment of development limits could result in encouraging development in unsustainable locations, and their use is an appropriate local mechanism to actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable, in accordance with the NPPF. Removal of development limits could also result in cumulative negative impacts from unsustainable growth.

4. Policy SD6 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

- 4.1. The energy sector is identified as a key growth area in the Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan (RC05/13/1). The Redcar & Cleveland Growth Strategy (RC05/01) also supports the development of the energy and low carbon sector.
- 4.2. Policy SD6 aims to promote the use low and carbon technology in suitable locations within the borough. The approach taken in the Local Plan is based on the Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Study (2015) (RC04/02/1). The study considered theoretical technical potential, primarily for wind and solar energy, and the sensitivity of landscape to accommodate different types of development. The study also considered the suitability of various policy options for the Local Plan.
- 4.3. These options were further refined by the Council. Areas of potential suitability for wind and solar development were identified by layering a map of potentially suitable areas for wind and solar energy (the results of an assessment of technical potential based on a refinement of the Department of Energy and Climate Change methodology) and areas of moderate to lower sensitivity to these technologies. Alternative thresholds of landscape sensitivity were considered, however it was considered that limiting identified areas to those of low sensitivity only would be overly restrictive as this would exclude the majority

of the Plan area and could prevent development which could be successfully accommodated through appropriate design. Conversely it was considered that identifying areas of higher sensitivity on the Policies Map would include landscapes which are unlikely to be suitable for these types of development. It was also considered that there was insufficient evidence to support the allocation of specific sites and that it may be difficult to secure the agreement of landowners to allocate sites.

- 4.4. In addition to supporting community led projects, the policy also includes a number of criteria to ensure that developments do not have a detrimental impact on the surrounding area. Following consultation on the Draft Local Plan (2016) a specific criterion relating to the impact on the North York Moors National Park (NYMNP) and its setting was added as requested by the NYMNP Planning Authority who have confirmed their support for this change. Specific reference to the impact on heritage assets and their setting was also added to the policy at the request of Historic England, following consultation on the Draft Local Plan. In response to consultation on the Publication Local Plan, Historic England have requested that reference to heritage assets is also added to the supporting text. Additional text is proposed in the minor modifications schedule for clarity and to aid the implementation of this policy.