

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

COUNCIL

DATE: 22 FEBRUARY 2017

NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY DRAFT PLAN

Report of the Director of Planning and Economy

Cabinet Member: Councillor Allan Hepple - Economic Growth

Purpose of Report

To seek approval to submit the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Draft Plan to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Council:

- **Approves the following documents:**
 - **Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan (October 2015) (Appendix A);**
 - **Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan: Schedule of Proposed Major Modifications (June 2016) (Appendix B);**
 - **Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan: Schedule of Proposed Further Major Modifications (November 2016) (Appendix C);**
 - **Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy - Pre-Submission Draft: Schedule of Proposed Additional Major Modifications (February 2017) (Appendix D);**
 - **Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan: Schedule of Proposed Minor Modifications (February 2017) (Appendix E);**
 - **Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft - Consolidated document showing proposed modifications (February 2017) (Appendix F)**

as the submission documents which form the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Draft Plan;

- **Approves the submission of the above documents to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination; and**
- **Delegates authority to the Director of Planning and Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth, to:**
 - **Approve any non-material amendments to the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy - Pre-Submission Draft: Schedule of Proposed Additional Major Modifications (February 2017) (Appendix D) and the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan: Schedule of Proposed Minor Modifications (February 2017) (Appendix E) documents prior to submission of the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Draft Plan to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination;**
 - **Approve the making of any changes necessary to the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Draft Plan and supporting documentation during its examination; and**
 - **Undertake consultation on any modifications to the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Draft Plan recommended by the Planning Inspector acting on behalf of the Secretary of State at examination.**

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the Places and Environment priority included in the Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan 2013 - 2017.

Key Issues

- The Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy will:
 - Set out the strategic planning policies of the Council;
 - Provide the planning principles to guide future development and planning decisions in Northumberland¹ from 2011 to 2031;
 - Set out the general scale and distribution of new development which is required to meet Northumberland's needs to 2031; and
 - Include strategic allocations for housing and employment.
- In accordance with National Planning Policy the Council must, through the Core Strategy, provide a positive planning policy framework that supports and grows the economy.
- The most significant challenge to the delivery of the vision of the Core Strategy is the profile of the Northumberland population. Without positive policy intervention, Northumberland will not have the working age population to support delivery of the Economic Strategy or the Core Strategy. Projections show that there is likely to be a significant acceleration in the ageing of Northumberland's population and this change in the age profile has substantial potential to have a significant

¹ Excluding Northumberland National Park which is a separate Local Planning Authority and has separate adopted planning policies

negative impact on the long term diversity and resilience of communities across the County.

- The Local Development Scheme (LDS) currently identifies that the Council will submit the Core Strategy for Independent Examination to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in March 2017.
- There are six documents which will form the submission of the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Draft Plan as listed in the recommendation above.
- Following the recent consultation on proposed Further Major Modifications, Officers have been reviewing the responses received during the consultation period as well as undertaking discussions with key statutory bodies and stakeholders. It is considered that there is the need to make a number of additional modifications to the Pre-Submission Draft Core Strategy in response to the consultation feedback received, which will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination alongside the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan documents - the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy - Pre-Submission Draft: Schedule of Proposed Additional Major Modifications (February 2017) (Appendix D). These modifications will be submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration at the Independent Examination. The Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy - Pre-Submission Draft: Schedule of Proposed Minor Modifications (Appendix E) and the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft - Consolidated Document showing proposed modifications (February 2017) (Appendix F) are being submitted to the Secretary of State for information as part of the Independent Examination.
- At the Examination the Inspector will look at the Core Strategy, the evidence supporting it and representations received at the Pre-Submission consultation (October to November 2015), the Major Modifications consultation (June to July 2016) and the Further Major Modifications (November to December 2016) stages and judge whether it is sound and whether it meets the legal and duty to cooperate requirements. The Inspector may suggest further modifications to the Core Strategy before it is formally adopted by the Council. Further information will be provided on the Examination process when the Submission Stage commences.

Background

1. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) currently identifies that the Council will submit the Core Strategy for Independent Examination to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in March 2017. This report seeks approval to submit the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Draft Plan to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for or Independent Examination.
2. Attached to this report are six documents which will form the submission of the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Draft Plan. These are listed in full in the recommendation section above.

3. The Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan (October 2015) (Appendix A) was consulted upon during October and November 2015. Almost 1,850 comments were received from almost 400 respondents, including group responses representing interest groups as well as resident and action groups. This document was intended as the final formal 'publication' stage prior to submission of the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination. However, a number of soundness issues were raised and there was a need to make changes to the Core Strategy prior to submission which required a further consultation on proposed major modifications.
4. The Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan: Schedule of Proposed Major Modifications (June 2016) (Appendix B) contained modifications to help address the soundness issues raised on the Pre-Submission Draft Core Strategy (October 2015). As these modifications were significant in nature, affecting the policy framework of the plan and its interpretation, it was considered necessary to undertake consultation during June and July 2016 on the proposed Major Modifications. Over 800 comments were received from almost 300 respondents, including group responses representing interest groups as well as resident and action groups.
5. During the consultation on the Proposed Major Modifications, the Council agreed to the submission of an Expression of Interest to DCLG for the development of a Garden Village at Dissington and approved the making of further modifications to the Core Strategy to allow for the garden village proposal to be brought forward through the Plan. In order to take account of the Dissington Garden Village proposal and to reflect changed circumstances in relation to the employment land allocations in Morpeth, it was considered important that interested parties be given the opportunity to comment on these further proposed modifications to the Core Strategy prior to the Core Strategy being submitted to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination. The consultation on the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan: Schedule of Proposed Further Major Modifications (November 2016) (Appendix C) took place between November and December 2016. During the consultation period, over 175 comments were received from over 100 respondents, including group responses representing interest groups as well as resident and action groups.
6. Following the consultation on the proposed Further Major Modifications, Officers have been reviewing the responses received during the consultation period as well as undertaking discussions with key statutory bodies and stakeholders. It is considered that there is the need to make a number of additional modifications to the Pre-Submission Draft Core Strategy in response to the consultation feedback received, which will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination alongside the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan documents - the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy - Pre-Submission Draft: Schedule of Proposed Additional Major Modifications (February 2017) (Appendix D)
7. The Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy - Pre-Submission Draft: Schedule of Proposed Additional Major Modifications (February 2017) (Appendix D) identifies the additional major modifications that the Council are proposing to make

to the Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan. These modifications will be submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration at the Independent Examination. Whilst there are a number of chapters where there are no proposed additional major modifications at this stage, there could possibly be other modifications which will be presented to the Inspector for consideration at the Examination.

8. A summary of the proposed additional major modifications by chapter are provided in the following paragraphs:

- The proposed additional major modifications to Chapter 5 '*Delivering a thriving and competitive economy*' include changes to policy wording to ensure consistency with national planning policy in relation to conserving and enhancing the historic environment and also to improve clarity in relation to the windfall employment development policy. An amendment has also been made to Prudhoe's town centre boundary to fully reflect the latest planning status / specific investment opportunities.
- The proposed additional major modifications to Chapter 6 '*Providing existing and future communities with a choice of decent, affordable homes*' include:
 - Clarification with regards to triggers for a policy / plan review in relation to housing delivery;
 - The Affordable Housing policy and supporting text has been amended to provide greater clarity and certainty as to when an affordable housing contribution is required, the level of affordable housing required, and how the policy will be monitored and reviewed; and
 - The Rural Exceptions Sites policy has been amended to support non-traditional housing delivery methods and to offer more effective protection to the environment.
- In relation to Chapter 8 '*Conserving and enhancing Northumberland's distinctive and valued natural, historic, water and build environments*' the proposed additional major modifications include changes to the policy wording of the Landscape and Historic Environment and Heritage Assets policies to ensure consistency with national planning policy in relation to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- The proposed additional further major modifications to Chapter 10 '*Community well-being*' relate to an amendment of policy wording of the Green Infrastructure policy to align with national planning policy in relation to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- The additional major modifications to Chapter 11 '*Managing natural resources*' relate to amendments to the supporting text of the onshore wind energy policy to provide clarity and consistency with the Written Ministerial Statement issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 18 June 2015 and to provide clarity in respect

to how suitable areas for wind turbine development will be considered in the Local Plan.

- The additional major modifications to Chapter 13 '*Dissington Garden Village*' include an amendment to the supporting text to clarify that the Garden Village will not be included in the calculation of Northumberland's five year housing land supply and an amendment to the Masterplan policy (DGV2) to provide more effective protection for the environment.
9. The Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy - Pre-Submission Draft: Schedule of Proposed Minor Modifications (Appendix E) sets out the Minor Modifications that the Council is proposing to make to the Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan. An earlier version of this schedule of proposed minor modifications was issued for information at the time of the consultation on the proposed Major Modifications (June 2016). Since June 2016, some minor modifications have been subsequently amended and additional minor modifications added to the schedule. The Council has not invited comments on these as they are considered minor - i.e. not significant in nature, and not affecting the policy framework of the plan or its interpretation. The schedule of proposed minor modifications will be submitted to the Secretary of State for information as part of the Independent Examination.
 10. A version of the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy - Pre-Submission Draft which incorporates all of the modifications has also been prepared to assist in providing the context for the range of proposed Major and Minor Modifications to the Plan. This document includes the Proposed Major Modifications (June 2016); the Proposed Further Major Modifications (November 2016); the Proposed Additional Major Modifications (February 2017); the Proposed Minor Modifications (June 2016); and the Proposed Minor Modifications (February 2017) - the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft - Consolidated document showing proposed modifications (February 2017) (Appendix F). This document will be submitted to the Secretary of State for information only as part of the Independent Examination.
 11. A substantial number of evidence based studies have been used to inform preparation of the Core Strategy. A lot of the evidence based work is already published on the Council's website. Any update to the evidence documents will be available at the start of the Submission Stage.
 12. In addition to the evidence base work, a number of legal compliance documents are also available on the Council's website. Updates to these documents, where necessary, will also be available online at the start of the Submission Stage.

Core Strategy - Next Steps

13. Subject to approval by Full Council, the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Draft Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination during March 2017. An independent Planning Inspector will be appointed to undertake the Independent Examination and to consider the soundness of the Core Strategy having regard to all of the representations received.

14. At the Examination the Inspector will look at the Core Strategy, the evidence supporting it and representations received at the Pre-Submission consultation (October to November 2015), the Major Modifications consultation (June to July 2016) and the Further Major Modifications (November to December 2016) stages and judge whether it is sound and whether it meets the legal and duty to cooperate requirements. The Inspector may suggest further modifications to the Core Strategy before it is formally adopted by the Council. Further information will be provided on the Examination process when the Submission Stage commences.
15. The current key milestones in the LDS are set out in the table below:

Date	Milestone
February 2017	Full Council considers Submission Core Strategy documents
March 2017	Submission of Core Strategy documents
Mid to late summer 2017	Examination
December 2017	Adoption

Implications

Policy	The Core Strategy when adopted will form part of the Council's planning policy framework.
Finance and value for money	Plan preparation costs will be met from within existing Council budgets.
Legal	Local Planning Authorities must prepare a Local Plan which sets planning policies in a local authority area. Local Plans must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the National Planning Policy Framework.
Procurement	None
Human Resources	Work on the Core Strategy involves both Council Officers and Members.
Property	The adopted Core Strategy will apply to land and buildings owned by the County Council as they apply to land and buildings owned by others.
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Previous drafts of the Core Strategy have been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment. An updated Equality Assessment will be published alongside the submission of the Core Strategy Pre-Submission documents.
Risk Assessment	The preparation of the Northumberland Local Plan has been the subject of a risk assessment.
Crime & Disorder	Crime and disorder considerations will be taken into account in the preparation of the Core Strategy.
Customer Consideration	The Core Strategy, once adopted, will bring together and supersede many planning policies from the former County and District Council planning documents into a single document, ensuring consistency in planning policies across the County and thereby making it easier for the public to understand.
Carbon reduction	The emerging Northumberland Core Strategy includes draft policy approaches relating to climate change and carbon reduction.
Wards	All

Background papers

- Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Issues and Options (May 2012)
- Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Preferred Options, Stage 1 (February 2013)
- Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Preferred Options (stage 2) Housing, Employment and Green Belt consultation document (October 2013)
- Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Full Draft Plan (December 2014)
- Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan (October 2015)
- Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan: Schedule of Proposed Major Modifications (June 2016)
- Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan: Schedule of Proposed Minor Modifications (June 2016)
- Cabinet Report on DCLG:Local Led Garden Villages (12 July 2016)
- Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre-Submission Draft Plan: Schedule of Proposed Further Major Modifications (November 2016)
- Northumberland County Council Local Development Scheme 2016-2019 (November 2016)

Report sign off

	initials
Finance Officer	n/a
Monitoring Officer/Legal	LH
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Executive Director	GP
Portfolio Holder	AH

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