

**COUNCIL**

A meeting of the Council was held on Wednesday 5 March 2025.

**PRESENT:** Councillors J Rostron (Chair), J Ewan (Vice-Chair), J Banks, I Blades, D Branson, E Clynch, C Cooke - Elected Mayor, J Cooke, C Cooper, D Davison, T Furness, P Gavigan, L Henman, B Hubbard, L Hurst, D Jackson, J Kabuye, L Lewis, T Livingstone, J McConnell, I Morrish, J Platt, S Platt, A Romaine, J Ryles, M Smiles, J Thompson, S Tranter, Z Uddin, N Walker, G Wilson, J Young and L Young

**OFFICERS:** C Benjamin, S Bonner, B Carr, A Davis, G Field, R Horniman, S Lightwing and E Scollay

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors D Coupe, TA Grainge, S Hill, N Hussain, D Jones, D McCabe, M McClintock, J McTigue, J Nicholson, M Saunders and P Storey

24/106 **WELCOME AND FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chair welcomed all those present and advised attendees of the fire evacuation process.

24/107 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Member	Type of Interest	Item/ Nature of Interest
Cllr Luke Henman	Non-Pecuniary	No. 4 (Publication Local Plan) – employed by a Registered Social Landlord.

24/108 **PUBLICATION LOCAL PLAN**

The Chair announced the passing of Brian Dinsdale, the former Chief Executive of the Council between 2003 and 2005 and prior to that he had been Chief Executive at Hartlepool Council since 1988. The Chair invited Members to join her in a minute silence.

The Chair invited the Executive Member for Development to present the report.

The report sought approval of the Publication Local Plan, which set out the Council's emerging planning policy framework that would guide development and decisions on planning applications and covered the period 2022 – 2041. Critically, it set out the housing allocations where new housing development was proposed to take place, alongside other planning policies for housing; economic growth; green and blue infrastructure; physical, social and environmental infrastructure; the historic environment; and design/placemaking.

Once agreed, the Publication Local Plan would be subject to a statutory period of public consultation, following which the plan would be submitted to the Government for Independent Examination ahead of its adoption. There was a statutory duty for the Council to prepare a Local Plan for its area. The Publication Local Plan had been prepared in accordance with national policy and legislation, taking into account other Council plans and strategies. This included being based on a robust evidence base.

It had been informed by two earlier public consultation exercises. The implications of the recommendations had been considered by the appropriate officers of the Council and were set out in the main body of the report.

The implications of the report had been considered by officers and the existing Local Plan was not fit for purpose.

Members were advised the Local Plan was an important document and the current Local Plan was not fit for purpose. The updated plan would address the changes to the National Planning Policy Framework which were detailed in the report.

The plan would give the Council an opportunity to determine where new housing was built rather than leave it to developers. Due to changes in the National Planning Policy Framework, there were transitional provisos which would allow Middlesbrough to increase the number of its dwellings to 418 throughout the plan period. National guidance allowed for up to 522 dwellings per year and as such if the report was not agreed the Local Plan would need to be reconsidered using the higher number of 522 dwellings.

The Executive Member commented there had been concerns from residents about aspects of the previous Local Plan. These had been considered in the updated version, such as the allocation of a traveller site which was now to be Canon Park.

The Executive Member invited questions from Members of the Council.

A Member commented it was a relief to see an updated version of the Local Plan before Council and there were several important elements of it. One of those related to hot food takeaways, and while it was important to consider wider health implications of this, it was also important to recognise the economic benefits. Another important part of the plan concerned Houses of Multiple Occupation and how the plan would help address the concentration of those properties in certain areas of the town.

The Executive Member agreed with the comments made and stated the plan would give the Council more control over where Houses of Multiple Occupation were located and who was responsible for them.

A Member queried how Hemlington Lane, which was refused by Planning and Development Committee, was now in the draft Local Plan. It was clarified that while land could be allocated for certain purposes in the Local Plan this was detached from specific planning application processes and that objections to Local Plan entries could be objected to.

The Ward Member for Ayresome welcomed the resolution to the Teesaurus Park issue and queried if consideration had been given to the Stainsby development. The Executive Member responded that the Stainsby site was contained in the previous Local Plan and was dependent on a developer moving onto the site for it to progress. The Executive Member thanked the Ward Member for their work in relation to Stainsby. Overall, the Stainsby Master Plan would make that site more attractive.

A Member commented that, despite recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, the adoption the Local Plan gave the Council more control over the number of houses that could be built in the town and in a more sustainable way. The Executive Member stated it was important that Middlesbrough had more high-quality homes and that the target number of homes in the Local Plan was more manageable than those stipulated by national guidance.

A Member commented that while the Local Plan was a very important document, it was very large and only provided to all Members with relatively short notice. They also queried the delegation cited at paragraph 2.1 of the report. It was commented that while the document was large it had been published prior to the meeting in the normal way. It was also commented that the contents of the plan had been in the public domain in some form, but recognised the document was long, despite this.

A Member drew attention to objective E in the plan which referred to the need to protect the natural environment. When looking at the southern wards it was queried if objectives E, F H in the plan were applicable to those areas. The Member also asked what percentage of brown field sites would be built on over the next 15 years. The Executive Member stated they could not provide specific percentages, but most brown field sites were in the town centre, such as the Gresham. In terms of objectives E, F and H; new and high-quality housing would contribute to those objectives. It was commented that many of the established areas within Middlesbrough were once farmlands and expanding into such sites was a sign of growth in the town.

The Member continued that he was concerned about the infrastructure in the southern parts of the town, specifically a lack of cycleways as well as doctors and dentists. While some of those issues were not directly in the Member's ward they would have an impact on their ward. It was clarified that the creation of such services would be dependent on demand but there would be

improvements in infrastructure as developments progressed.

A Member asked how the Council would make sure the correct infrastructure was in place, and how residents could be reassured the Local Plan was appropriate. There were several initiatives in Nunthorpe that had still not happened, and residents were concerned about this in light of new houses being built. The Executive Member responded that the Local Plan had to consider infrastructure in relevant areas.

The Executive Member for Children's Services commented there was a need for more homes across the country and the Local Plan enabled the delivery of quality homes that were needed in Middlesbrough. The town had gone for too long without a Local Plan which led to the Council not having sufficient control over developments.

A Member commented that much of the Local Plan was a step in the right direction. However, despite it providing a structure for where new homes could be built there were very few places in the town the Local Plan did not allow building to take place. The plan seemed to be a step too far for residents and arguing central government would direct the Council in the absence of a Local Plan was not convincing. The Executive Member responded that central government would only instruct on how many houses could be built. There were areas of the town that developers had identified for new housing, but the Council had rejected. In terms of green space sites, it was commented that those sites were, by and large, old farming sites and were unlikely to have had public access. The Local Plan did allow for improved biodiversity which would see an increase in tree planting and waterways.

A Member queried what mitigations were being put in place to alleviate disruption to people's lives when developments were started. It was commented there were strict controls for developers when planning applications were made. Any breaches could potentially lead to action being taken against developers.

With regards to the St David's development, a Member stated the original plan allowed for 119 houses, however this had grown to 139. They asked if there was any reassurance that the Stainsby site would not expand beyond its planned 1,200 houses. The Executive Member stated the Local Plan was in place to ensure that developers adhered to the numbers of houses stated in the Local Plan, and any associated master plans, which also provided certainty.

The Mayor commented the plan ran until 2041 so any works identified would not be immediate. The Local Plan gave the planning process a stronger position as it would be working within the confines of the Local Plan.

**ORDERED** that Council

1. Approves the Publication Local Plan its subsequent submission to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination; and
2. Recommends that the Council delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Member for Development, to agree minor changes to the plan during the Independent Examination.