

APPENDIX 4:

Local Plan Workshop – October 22nd 2014 Summary of comments and discussion

Meeting: Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development

Date: 1st December 2014

Title: North Tyneside Local Plan – Further Consultation Draft

Contents

Local Plan Workshop	4
Who attended?	4
Purpose	4
Program.....	4
Discussion Groups.....	4
Feedback from delegates.....	5
Views of delegates: Economic Growth	5
Growth is Positive	5
Growth is Negative	5
Regional Issues	6
Riverside Area	6
Transport	7
Spatial.....	7
Type of Jobs	7
Views of delegates: Sustainable Access	8
Metro/Rail	8
Bus Services.....	9
Road Network.....	9
Cycling/Walking	9
North West of Borough	10
Existing Infrastructure	10
Housing, Jobs & Commuting	10
Views of delegates: Quality and Affordable Housing.....	11
Homes for Older People	11
Affordable Housing	11
Growth/Capacity	12
Type of Housing.....	12
Spatial Issues	12
Views of Delegates on the Built and Natural Environment	13
Built Environment.....	13
Natural Environment.....	13
Brownfield Sites	13

Heritage and Natural Assets	13
Delegates comments on growth from plenary session	14
High Growth (Growth Option A):	14
Medium Growth (Growth Option B).....	14
Low Growth (Growth Option C)	14

Local Plan Workshop

On Wednesday 22nd October 2014, 64 delegates attended a morning session held at North Tyneside Council.

Who attended?

The workshop was attended by the Council's key stakeholders in the delivery of the Local Plan.

Purpose

The purpose of the workshop was to engage key stakeholders and inform them of the developing evidence base for the Local Plan, including work that is being prepared by Arup as part of the Employment Land Review, and work by Edge Analytics and Arc4 for the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The key purpose of the workshop was to distil this information to delegates, and to give delegates the opportunity to discuss the sort of growth that might be considered most appropriate for the North Tyneside Local Plan.

Program

The program for the event was as follows:

- Welcome by the Chief Executive Patrick Melia
- Introduction by Neil Cole (Planning Policy Manager)
- Employment Land Review (ELR) presented by Tom Congrave, ARUP; and Kevan Carrick, JK Property Consultants
- Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Needs and Forecasts by Michael Bullock, Arc4
- Options for Growth in North Tyneside by Martin Craddock, Capita North Tyneside
- Discussion groups; Table 1 'Employment Land'; All other tables 'Views on growth'
- Plenary discussion

Discussion Groups

Having heard each of the presentations regarding evidence of housing and employment and forecasts for growth, a key part of the workshop was a break-out discussion where the following questions were introduced as stimulus for debate:

- Job growth suggests the Borough's role within Tyne and Wear could change to one of a net provider of jobs. Should the Borough's ambition be to maximise the growth in jobs? (Economic Growth question)
- To what degree should ease of access across North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) area be considered in assessing needs for homes and jobs in North Tyneside? (Sustainable Access question)
- New homes are crucial to meeting needs but can volume of housing that may be needed be delivered?

Are more and better jobs, and higher skills as important to increasing delivery to tackle affordability? (Quality and Affordable Housing question)

- Would growth in the Borough help to enhance or necessarily harm the built and natural assets that make North Tyneside attractive and successful? (The Built and Natural Environment)

All of these questions were viewed against the three proposed levels of growth; Higher, Medium and Lower growth.

Feedback from delegates

The purpose was to try to get the delegates to think about the different levels of growth and how they would broadly impact on North Tyneside. Outlined below is a summary of the comments from each of the tables from the discussion session.

Views of delegates: Economic Growth

Discussion question

Job growth suggests the Borough's role within Tyne and Wear could change to one of a net provider of jobs. Should the Borough's ambition be to maximise the growth in jobs?

Responses have been summarised below and separated into themes.

Growth is Positive

The majority of delegates found the growth in housing land to be a positive factor for the economy. It was considered that the assets of North Tyneside are good and hence this attracts businesses to the borough. Growth should be aspirational. More jobs are a good thing in principle.

One suggestion was that a strategy to grow employment is important but should also pull through housing on the back of it. It is more palatable to deliver homes and jobs. We should have higher aspirational growth in both jobs and homes.

A point was raised that the council should push for as much employment and businesses as possible as it is good for business rates and helps keep council tax lower to balance out business rates.

Most participants agreed that the Borough should maximise Economic Growth for jobs.

Growth is Negative

It was considered by some that economic growth was not positive. Delivery levels were questioned.

One delegate believed that “Cobalt is a disaster for taking office work out of the centre. As Cobalt is an Enterprise Zone, rents are cheaper”. He believed that Newcastle city centre is where you want the offices.

It was felt by one house builder that there is always housing demand in North Tyneside so perhaps use employment land for housing.

It was also believed that development is being moved around the Borough, which risks losing economic growth in places such as Killingworth.

One table felt that the higher growth option is not suitable in terms of jobs.

Regional Issues

It was considered that economic growth had to be dealt with at a regional level with the available employment land being allocated region wide. This could maximise jobs overall.

The types of business attracted to North Tyneside is similar to South East Northumberland in that there are a large number of B Class businesses, storage, large units etc.

Conversely, Newcastle has a larger amount of financial, professional type businesses in and work should be done to encourage these types of businesses in to North Tyneside, further to the developments at Quorum and Cobalt. The A19 and Port bring opportunities but more needs to be done to encourage further growth.

Riverside Area

The Riverside area was seen as being a key location for economic growth in North Tyneside. It was thought that the riverside extension of employment land connecting with Newcastle would provide more jobs. However it was considered that there would be more potential in the North Tyneside part of this area than the Newcastle part.

This would focus on locating employment away from the constraints of the coast. The marine and offshore industry is prevalent in this area and it was thought that local people should be trained in marine engineering so in the future local jobs will be for local people.

There is work being undertaken on the North Bank and other marine type of provision.

However, there was comment that the dredging required for development could harm biodiversity, with contamination a possible issue, and interrupt salmon routes.

Transport

Transport links are key when thinking about employment options.

There was largely support for increased public transport provision and extension of the Metro. One view was that the potential routes could improve access but destroy green space and a wildlife link. However such improved links would provide sustainable access to employment sites and employers need to look to be more sustainable. Delegates thought that there was an over reliance on cars to access business parks like Cobalt.

From a Nexus point of view cars need to be tempered. The best way to get people to use public transport is to target employment in key accessible hubs or areas. What's good about North Tyneside is a large part of the population live near employment areas.

However there were concerns with how the existing road infrastructure would cope with the level of job growth.

It was considered that where jobs are located depends on commuting patterns.

Spatial

There were concerns over the levels of employment land being allocated. One concern was that there is not enough land earmarked for employment. It was questioned whether there was more land that could be allocated.

A further concern was that lots of employment land has been allocated in the last ten years. One question that was outlined was whether this meant that less employment land would be needed over the next fifteen years as a result.

It was commented that the occupancy rates at Cobalt Business Park were low. One delegate considered that occupied floor space of Cobalt stayed static. The buildings were built because grants were available but this has led to the buildings being unoccupied office space.

However, other delegates suggested this perception of the Cobalt Business Park was no longer accurate with Highbridge indicating that 82% of the Park is occupied.

It was recognised that the loss of green space is inevitable for economic growth to occur. The need to maximise what development can offer in terms of green space was mentioned. The limitations to Employment Land, green space etc. And the methods to protect what makes North Tyneside unique were questioned.

Type of Jobs

There was much debate over the type of jobs North Tyneside should cater for. A general consensus was that there should be an economic strategy for North Tyneside.

The health and social care is a sector that will continue to grow with the growing elderly population and whilst there is a great demand for this already, it will only develop; this should be considered as a growth area.

Leisure provision has similar characteristics. If a large sports and leisure organisation applied to North Tyneside for a facility, its location and how it would fit into the employment land strategy, must be considered.

The work being undertaken on the coast at Spanish City dome and coastal regeneration will also generate employment opportunities and bring in jobs.

However, if a large company moves in then they could draw in more people.

Conversely, North Tyneside also provides much office space. Businesses use Cobalt and Quorum rather than sites in Newcastle for ease of access and cheaper rates.

Successful authorities have in the past focused on a specific sector of employment type which seems to be what NTC has done.

Views of delegates: Sustainable Access

Discussion question

To what degree should ease of access across Tyne and Wear the NE LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) to be considered in assessing needs for homes and jobs in North Tyneside?

Responses have been summarised below and separated into themes.

Metro/Rail

Delegates considered that the metro stations and bus networks in the Borough already provide good access to jobs and homes. The infrastructure already exists and it is through this that people in North Tyneside do travel sustainably. Where the provision is needed is greater links to South East Northumberland.

There was a proposal for an extended train link to reopen the Ashington, Blyth and Tyne line to Ashington and Blyth – included as a proposal in the emerging Northumberland County Council Core Strategy. This has been discussed on and off for about 15 years and the difficulty will be raising the public finance to make it work. It would be good if it did happen but it is not likely in the short term.

As a result of primarily the Metro, delegates commented that the average commuting time in North Tyneside is a lot less than in other areas of the country. Indeed good connections make it easy for people to commute metro. However travel by public transport when not on the metro network is difficult.

It would be too difficult to extend Metro to the west of the Borough although this would unleash potential for more connections. Nexus has identified in its metro Strategy 2014 a new Metro line between Howdon and Northumberland Park through

Cobalt Business Park and Silverlink. This would provide sustainable access to the A19 corridor.

The Metro is a fixed asset, but people are more likely to use the Metro than the bus. As a result, a vast number of delegates would encourage development near the metro. A big part of attracting younger people to live in the borough is living near the metro as it provides quick and easy access to Newcastle city centre. A higher density of housing near to Metro stations would encourage sustainable use.

Bus Services

In general, delegates believed that the bus services in the Borough could be greatly improved. One comment was that there must be greater emphasis on nicer and cheaper buses. The No 19 service that operates to the Cobalt Business Park is a modern, clean and efficient bus service and a good benchmark to measure quality bus services by.

Integration between transport modes was also recommended, with more busses linking with the metro, with integrated timetables to minimise waiting times when changing modes. This would make commuting by public transport easier to more places in the borough, as previously stated the metro is a fixed asset however busses can access every part of the borough.

Road Network

It was considered that although people are well catered for in relation to buses and metros in the Borough, they still prefer to take their car. Using public transport is a social and cultural issue and work must be done to encourage greater use of it.

It was noted that North Tyneside Council has secured funding to spend a lot of money on highways improvements. North Tyneside has good road links (A19/A1058) and it is felt that there is an opportunity to take advantage of existing road infrastructure. Indeed works are underway to look at capacities at junctions etc. Access to Cobalt by car was outlined as an area of concern due to the increased uptake in the number occupiers of office space.

There has been £200 million of improvements to the Tyne Tunnel. It was noted that many people commute east/west to Newcastle and Cobalt/Silverlink business parks. However, the east/west road network in North Tyneside is poor compared to the north /south road network, in the shape of the A19 and A189. For businesses, the A19 is a key connection to the south and to the north, via the A1.

However many houses are being considered around or near the A19 that could bring increasing demands. A pinch point may develop on the A19 to the north of the Borough.

Cycling/Walking

Delegates believed that there is lots of potential for cycling and the Borough has excellent resources. The 'Wagonway' network, combined with other off road and on road cycle paths provide good cycling links across the borough.

There are cycling improvements in Newcastle e.g. Gosforth/Jesmond/Heaton. It was felt that North Tyneside could learn from these successful schemes.

However it was noted that cycling and walking are not always viable. However, they could be linked better with public transport networks.

North West of Borough

The North West of the Borough is not as well provided for in terms of transport. There are a handful of bus services to Newcastle but there is no Metro service. Access to other parts of the Borough is poor. As a result, many residents rely on cars to travel locally. A better public transport network would encourage businesses to this part of the borough.

The north west of the Borough shares long borders with both Newcastle City Council and Northumberland County Council areas. It was felt by delegates that more cooperation is needed with these councils. There is the opportunity to improve transport links in conjunction with planned housing in Newcastle Great Park and around Newcastle Airport.

Existing Infrastructure

Delegates stated that they considered North Tyneside to be much better than other areas for transport and accessibility, indeed one of the most accessible areas in Tyne and Wear.

It was felt that the infrastructure is in place, but it is not always used and North Tyneside Council needed to ensure that people use the infrastructure. One suggestion was to improve the existing infrastructure in order to cope with new housing and jobs.

Housing, Jobs & Commuting

The general view was that North Tyneside would not become an employment hub like Newcastle. People will always commute to the City and therefore accessibility must be considered highly. One point was that there might be diversity within a household, with some members of the household working in North Tyneside and some outside of the Borough. North Tyneside's transport links are ideally placed to meet such requirements and commuting is a key issue in North Tyneside.

There is a need to provide housing options for people with some delegates querying whether it mattered if North Tyneside is not the focus for jobs given the relative accessibility of the Borough. It was felt that it was not an issue as housing choices cross boundaries. Meanwhile, where workers and residents spend money was seen as an important issue and it could be considered that if people work in Newcastle

they might spend their money there and not in North Tyneside. This provides a counter view where it may be better to provide jobs above housing.

Views of delegates: Quality and Affordable Housing

Discussion questions

New homes are crucial to meeting needs but can the volume of housing that may be needed be delivered?

Are more and better jobs and higher skills as important to increasing delivery to tackle affordability?

Responses have been summarised below and separated into themes.

Homes for Older People

It is seen by delegates that providing homes for the ageing population is key. The developers stated that they do not mind providing homes for older people; the extra care housing programme is easy to implement and is very important to society. Currently, Northumberland has the highest level of ageing or retired people in the country. A question was raised whether this trend may spread south into North Tyneside, especially in coastal areas.

Work needs to be undertaken to address the need for housing for the ageing population.

It was stated that there the perception of concern that as soon as you are 65 you should be moved or considered for extra care housing is something that needs careful managing and sensitivity. However, there could be provision made for older people homes on new and developing housing schemes.

Bungalows are often seen as ideal homes for older people, due to the lack of stairs and ease of access. Whilst it is true that they are needed, conventional houses can be adapted to purpose with devices such as stair lifts. Indeed bungalows are not efficient for house builders as they take up lots of land area for roughly half the floor space. Due to the stigma attached to bungalows, many over 65s do not want to live in one, as it makes them feel 'old'.

Affordable Housing

The need for affordable homes is country wide issue. In the past ten years, 700 affordable homes have been delivered in North Tyneside. A proportion of private housing stock needed to deliver affordable housing in order to make schemes viable. The volume of houses and the type of houses built are strongly linked.

People want to live in North Tyneside due to the open space and more suburban feeling instead of a city centre type lifestyle. As a result, there is a long waiting list for

affordable housing. This is also not surprising as house prices are high in North Tyneside, especially at the coast.

Growth/Capacity

Housing capacity was seen as a key issue by delegates. It was recognised that North Tyneside is a very popular place for house building. However, if North Tyneside builds too many houses the local housing market may suffer, as the market will be saturated. However it was outlined that there are a finite number of people in the North East so there is a limit to the number of houses that can be built.

Northumberland County Council also has major growth plans. It is clear that the demand is there, with interest mainly in the commuter belt area.. However achievable growth is, it will take time to deliver the number of homes expected.

The supply of houses has to be deliverable and viable. Building costs have increased significantly and as a result housing delivery has become more challenging. Section 106 also affects viability and constrains supply in order to maintain price.

It was seen as appropriate to have a land bank so it doesn't constrain growth. Some views suggested that North Tyneside needs to be self sufficient as a Borough and deliver both housing and employment.

Type of Housing

Delegates considered it to be imperative to build the right type of home in order to avoid vacant properties. Although it would take up more land area, family sized housing is in demand. Executive housing can help to promote to the retention of affluent individuals and families. Building the correct size and type of housing is more important than securing higher paid jobs.

We have a buoyant housing market in North Tyneside. We now have three or four big strategic sites; it is about providing the right type of housing. Volume and property type go hand in hand.

Spatial Issues

Many delegates saw that the Newcastle - North Tyneside - South East Northumberland housing market was interlinked.

It was felt that the location of the new housing was the key issue. There will be a massive choice to make to be made in delivering homes and managing green spaces. It was felt that making the countryside more accessible should be explored. Housing in the right locations doesn't necessarily mean a negative impact on the environment.

Views of Delegates on the Built and Natural Environment

Discussion question

Would growth in the Borough help to enhance or necessarily harm the built and natural assets that make North Tyneside attractive and successful?

Built Environment

It was recognised that open land can have many purposes, and that development could increase flood risk if not appropriately mitigated to control potential increases in run-off. As a result, open space was seen as a positive aspect to developments, giving more open views and green space and adding value for developers. Coupled with recent works and investments across the Borough, this has enhanced the attractiveness of North Tyneside.

Natural Environment

It was a general consensus from delegates that the green spaces of North Tyneside were an asset to the Borough. Indeed it was commented upon that residents are attached to green space near to their homes, and that residents would not welcome development on greenfield land. It was also felt that central green spaces are more valuable to residents than the agricultural green belt, as they are more prominent in relation to resident's homes, and more accessible and useable.

Reflecting this it was questioned whether some green belt areas are less valuable than other areas, and if some may have to be sacrificed to protect others.

However, it was suggested that some green space would have to be lost in the future in order to accommodate housing growth.

Brownfield Sites

It was stated that sometimes brownfield sites can be more challenging to develop. North Tyneside now has a number of brownfield sites and it was questioned whether brownfield sites could be 'piggybacked' onto some of the more successful large green field sites.

Heritage and Natural Assets

It was noted that there are a number of conservation areas in North Tyneside due to the quality of the built environment.

Delegates comments on growth from plenary session

After the discussion, the delegates were given the opportunity to comment on the level of growth which they thought would be the most appropriate for North Tyneside by placing a 'post it' on the poster for their preferred option.

High Growth (Growth Option A):

In general this growth option was not something that many of the delegates considered to be suitable, and this became clear as none of the delegates supported this option in the plenary session. Some did outline that medium growth should be a minimum (baseline) for the growth, aiming towards high.

Three of the delegates did set out that they thought that the growth figure for North Tyneside should be higher than the 'high growth' figure set out in the presentations and the discussion groups.

Medium Growth (Growth Option B)

This was the most popular option, with **25 of the 30 delegates that took part in the plenary session supported this growth option for North Tyneside.**

Of the 30 delegates that supported the medium growth option, five outlined that the growth should be medium as a baseline, aiming towards high.

Two of the delegates outlined that they thought the growth figure should be to medium to low.

23 supported the medium scenario.

Low Growth (Growth Option C)

Two of the delegates supported the low growth option.