

OPENING STATEMENT TO THE HARBOROUGH LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION HEARINGS

OCTOBER 2018

Introduction

1. Firstly, sir, thank you very much for the opportunity to say a few words as the hearings concerning the new Local Plan for the Harborough District get underway.
2. My name is David Atkinson and I am Head of Planning and Regeneration at Harborough District Council.
3. I welcome the commencement of the hearings concerning the Harborough Local Plan 2011 to 2031.
4. The Submitted version of the Local Plan is the culmination of a number of years of very hard and diligent work from a considerable number of people, some of which will be representing the Council at these hearings as they progress. I express my sincere thanks to them all.
5. The Council is rightly proud of its submitted Local Plan which the Council consider lays out a robust, resilient and sound spatial development strategy for the District in the period 2011 – 2031.

The Plan

6. The Council feel that that the Plan meets all its statutory obligations, not least the statutory Duty to Cooperate. It has been prepared in accordance with an up to date Local Development Scheme and meets the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement.
7. The Plan has been through wide-ranging public and stakeholder consultation all of which has been invaluable in shaping the submitted version of the plan.

8. In excess of 1,000 contributions have been made from a wide range of individuals and organisations to the formulation of the Plan at its various stages of preparation. I would like to express my thanks to them all for taking the time to participate in the process of plan-making.
9. The plan enables sustainable development to be achieved across the District through a balanced and diverse mix of site types, sizes and development densities.
10. The Council consider that the plan provides for the delivery of the necessary number of new dwellings, including affordable dwellings, to meet the District's Objectively Assessed Housing Need and no doubt this will be tested through these hearings.
11. The Plan also provides for a vibrant mix of new employment provision so at the heart of the strategy of the Plan is a sustainable balance between new homes and new jobs.
12. The Plan contains key strategic scale and smaller scale allocations for development in key locations across the District.
13. The Plan seeks to create new special places that future residents and visitors to the District will be proud to call home.
14. Maintaining the vigour and dynamism of the District's town centres is a key facet of the Plan and the protection and promotion of the considerable amount of heritage present in those centres as well as across the rest of the District is central to that aim.
15. The plan safeguards the high quality environment of the District in both urban and rural areas. High quality Urban Design, Landscape and Townscape character are important facets.

16. The maintenance and improvement of biodiversity is a key tenet of the strategy of the Plan together with mitigating against the excesses of Climate Change.
17. The provision of new infrastructure to support the delivery of new development is an essential part of the Plan's approach to achieving sustainable development.
18. Crucially the achievements of the Plan will need to be monitored in order to gauge the success of the Plan and to inform its eventual review. A clear approach to the monitoring and eventual review of the Plan is set out.

Closing Summary

19. In short the Council welcomes the Examination hearings concerning its Local Plan and looks forward to working with you sir, and other parties as appropriate, to ensure that we have a sound plan. The District has been subject to a significant amount of unplanned development over recent years and we look forward to the hopefully not too distant date when the Local Plan will be adopted, enabling the delivery of sustainable development that the District needs and all of the considerable benefits to be realised on the ground.
20. Thank you very much again for the opportunity to say a few words sir.

DCA October 2018