

STOCKTON-ON-TEES LOCAL PLAN

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1.1 The Borough of Stockton-on- Tees lies between Darlington to the west and Middlesbrough to the east.

1.2 The main centre of population is the town of Stockton itself. Other towns include Billingham, Thornaby and Yarm. A number of villages ring the main urban area, many not much more than one mile from the built-up part of the Borough.

1.3 The Borough has excellent road communications, being dissected by two trunk roads, the A 19 running north-south and the A66 running east-west. It is also served by two local rail links, east-west between Middlesbrough and Darlington, and also to Hartlepool and Newcastle to the north and York to the south. Figure 1 shows the Borough in context.

1.4 The Borough owes its origins to the River Tees, a feature whose prominence is gradually being restored. The river was previously tidal, but a Barrage, completed at the end of 1994, maintains the height of the river more or less at high tide level.

Need for a Plan

1.5 The Planning and Compensation Act 1991 requires Borough Councils to prepare a Local Plan to cover the whole of their district. Previous development plans for the Borough are now obsolete; these include the Billingham, Stockton and Thornaby Town Maps dating from 1961. In addition, a number of informal plans which have been prepared in the past have been superseded by the Local Plan. These are the Yarm Town Centre Action Area Plan (1983), the draft Stockton Town Centre Local Plan (1987), and the Informal Studies of Village Envelopes (1990).

1.6 Where policies and proposals are still appropriate they are incorporated in this current Local Plan. A number of informal plans have been followed to guide and control development in specific locations and will remain for that purpose.

Purpose of the Local Plan

1.7 The Stockton Local Plan, together with the Cleveland Structure Plan, will provide the basis for development in all of Stockton-on- Tees Borough. The Local Plan identifies the precise boundaries of policies contained in the Cleveland Structure Plan, such as the key residential and industrial allocations, and the green wedges between towns. It also shows the location of more minor residential and industrial proposals and all other areas affected by policies and proposals. These are represented on the Ordnance Survey -based Proposals Map.

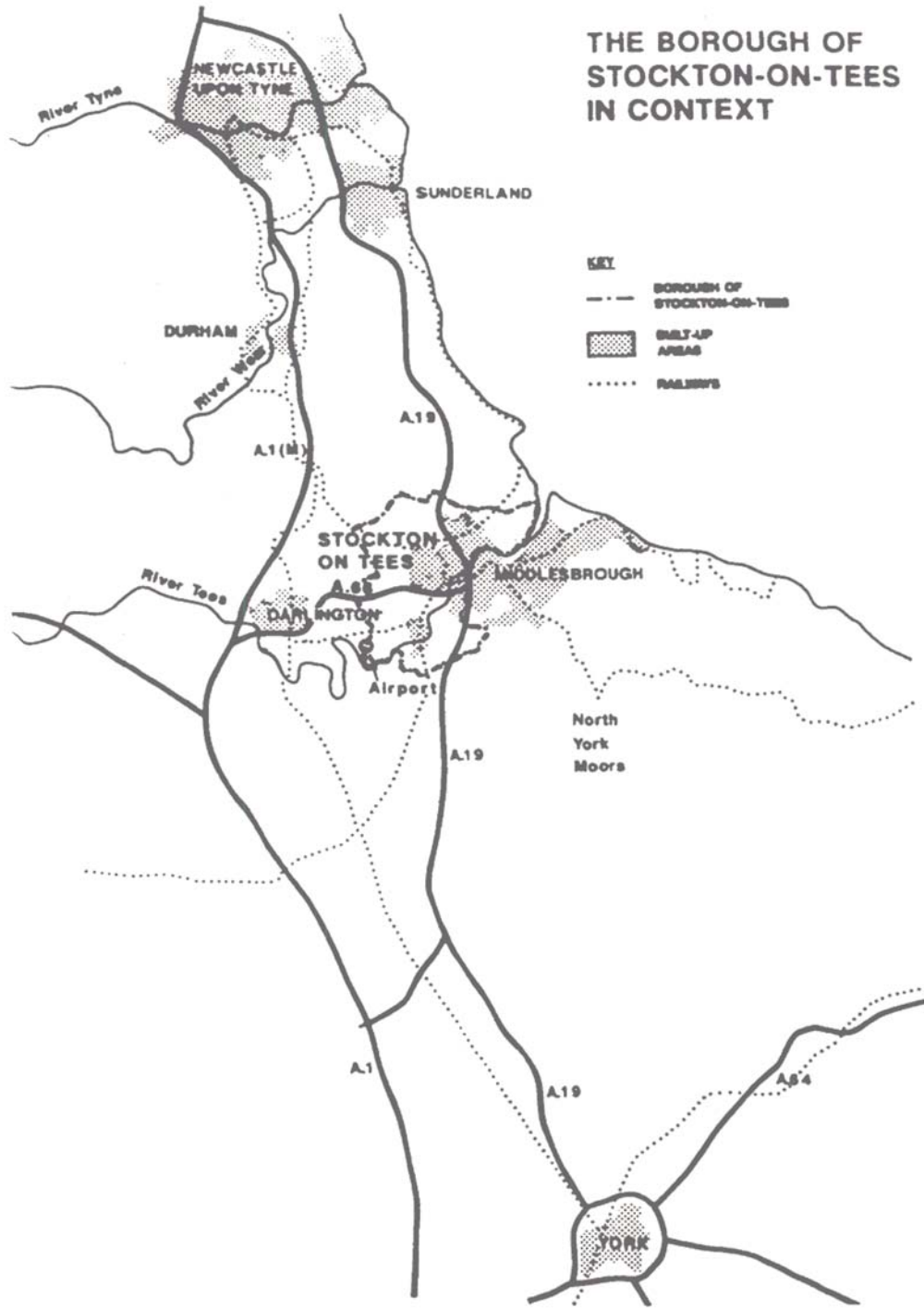
How Does the Plan Relate to Other Planning Guidance?

1.8 The Stockton-on- Tees Local Plan is just one level within a hierarchy of planning policy and guidance.

1.9 Government policy is contained in town planning legislation and explained through Department of the Environment (DoE) circulars and Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs). Regional Planning Guidance was produced in September 1993 for the counties of Cleveland, Durham and Northumberland. The Local Plan takes account of both national and regional planning guidance.

FIGURE 1

THE BOROUGH OF STOCKTON-ON-TEES IN CONTEXT



Regional Planning Guidance

1.10 Regional Planning Guidance for the Northern Region stresses that County Councils, through their Structure Plans, should continue to concentrate on the regeneration of the Region's existing urban areas, attracting employment to the area to improve its economic base. At the same time, the authorities should continue to pursue policies designed to safeguard the countryside, forests and coastline.

Cleveland Structure Plan

1.11 The Cleveland Structure Plan was approved in 1990 and altered in 1995. This Plan provides a strategic policy statement of how development should take place in the County over the next few years. Consideration is given to the economy, the environment, shopping, housing and transport. It sets out in broad terms the land requirements for housing and industry which the Borough must provide until 2001. These are shown in general terms on a 'key diagram'.

Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan

1.12 The Local Plan also has the following functions:

- i. it translates Structure Plan allocations on to an Ordnance Survey base.
- ii. it provides a firm basis for the determination of planning applications, by including clear policies and proposing areas for development and protection.
- iii. it provides guidance for those who have an interest in developing in the Borough (including the Teesside Development Corporation, private developers and the Stockton City Challenge). so that investment can take place in a sensible and co-ordinated manner.

- iv. it brings local issues to the attention of the public who can then make their contribution to the future of the Borough.

1.13 The Town and Country Planning Act (Development Plan) Regulation 1991 require authorities to have regard to environmental considerations when preparing plans, and Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 recommends that the environmental implications of policies should be appraised as part of the plan preparation process.

1.14 Throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, an environment-led approach has been adopted. This has included an appraisal of policy options in the allocation of land for different types of development and the highest possible protection has been given to the most environmentally sensitive and important sites.

Other Policies and Programmes

1.15 The Plan reflects where appropriate other policies and programmes to which Stockton Borough Council is committed. The proposals of Stockton City Challenge are reflected throughout the Plan. The Local Plan's transportation policies include significant road-building and public transport proposals for the Borough, as identified in the Council's Transport Policies and Programme (TPP). The Estate Action programme is incorporated in the housing policies which also reflect the Council's Housing Investment Programme.

Vision and Aims

1.16 Underpinning the Local Plan is the protection of the environment. This is the all-embracing context within which social and economic activity occurs. It is the source of raw materials. It includes varied landscapes and habitats, diverse in flora and fauna. Once destroyed, such variety and diversity are not easily reproduced. Exploitation should only be in a manner which ensures the environment is not irreversibly harmed nor resources wasted.

1.17 In common with the Stockton City Challenge Initiative, the Local Plan will be directed towards putting quality back into the lives of the people of Stockton-on-Tees Borough.

1.18 This overall vision will be realised by pursuing the following aims:

1. protecting and improving the environment;
2. increasing opportunities for investment and employment;
3. promoting urban and rural regeneration;
4. securing adequate decent housing;
5. improving the perception of the Borough as a place in which to live, work and visit;
6. maximising accessibility for all throughout the Borough.

Strategy

1.19 Having regard to the Cleveland Structure Plan, Stockton Council endorses the concept of compact urban growth as the best means of protecting natural landscapes and the countryside. and developing urban areas as attractive settings for human activity. Compact settlements will prevent the spread of development into the countryside. They afford opportunities for large scale mass transit systems. Improved and increasingly used public transport will reduce the need to accommodate motor vehicles and the need for more land for highways. The recycling of urban land together with clearance of dereliction will improve the appearance of towns and limit pressure for harmful expansion into the countryside.

1.20 In central Stockton and along the Tees, considerable attention is already being given to improving the quality of the environment, removing dereliction, and creating new employment, educational and recreational opportunities. Within the urban area there is adequate land for projected housing needs during the period of the Plan. A variety of sites are available for industrial development. There is no need for new allocations outside existing settlements. By focusing on the benefits afforded by accessibility within a compact settlement and ensuring appropriate design and development, more attractive living conditions can be created.

Form of the Plan

1.21 The Plan consists of a Written Statement and a Proposals Map. The Written Statement details the Council's policies and proposals under four main chapters, together with the justification for each. Policies and proposals are printed in bold type and capital letters, and are prefixed by a policy number. All policies should be read in conjunction with the other policies of the Plan.

1.22 The Proposals Map differs from the old Town Maps in that it does not show how all the land in the Borough is to be used. It indicates areas to which particular policies and proposals apply.

Changes to the Plan

1.23 There have been extensive changes to the Plan following public consultation. The main changes are as follows:-

- the strategy behind the Plan, including detailed objectives, is set out more clearly;
- the Plan has been updated to take account of the programmes being promoted as part of the City Challenge and Estate Action initiatives;

- the period which the Plan covers has been extended to 2006 and the housing supply figures have been adjusted to reflect this;
- the Plan reflects recent government guidance in the form of Planning Policy Guidance Notes;
- the Recreation section includes many of the proposals contained in the draft River Tees Recreation and Amenity Plan;
- more comprehensive development control guidance has been included;
- several sites within the Urban Development Area have been designated as sites suitable for a mix of uses;
- certain allocations and policies have been altered or added in response to individual representations and the report of the Inspector following the Public Local Inquiry.

General Principles

1.24 A number of general criteria will be used to assess proposals for new development in addition to those contained in the Cleveland Structure Plan and the individual sections of this Plan. These will help to fulfil the main aim of the Plan which is to improve the quality of life of the residents of the Borough.

i. Design and Appearance

All development should be designed so that it enhances the appearance of the area. The Council intends to prepare guidance for different types of development to encourage higher standards of design.

ii. Size and Type

Development should be of a scale and type which is in keeping with its surroundings. It should not seriously affect the amenity of neighbouring properties through, for example, loss of privacy, noise, smell or fumes.

iii. Existing Landscape Features

Existing landscape features, and trees in particular, can often be incorporated into development proposals, such as housing layouts, and help to integrate the scheme with its surroundings. To ensure that this is achieved satisfactorily, the Council will prepare development briefs for the larger sites allocated for development.

iv. Landscaping

High quality landscaping is often an essential part of a new scheme. It is not intended to hide a development, but to enhance its appearance and help to soften its impact. This applies through a whole range of uses including industrial proposals and new road schemes.

v. Energy Saving

land use patterns should develop in a way which promotes energy efficiency. Individual complexes and buildings must be designed so as to acknowledge the need to save energy.

vi. Vehicular Access and Parking

New development has implications for vehicular access and space for: manoeuvring and parking. The Council has standard requirements for parking requirements for the most common types of development, and these are set out in Appendix I. The Council's requirements for cycle parking are explained in the Transport chapter of this Plan. The input of traffic generated by a particular development will not be assessed solely in relation to the ability of the site to accommodate movement and manoeuvring, but the effect on highways and environments distant from the site will also be taken into account.

vii. Crime

Crime, and the fear of crime, have an increasingly significant effect on the quality of people's lives. The detailed design of a development can greatly reduce the opportunities for crime. New development should incorporate appropriate measures to achieve this, for example by ensuring that:

- car parks and open spaces are visible from the surrounding area, but nonetheless attractive in appearance;
- footpaths and car parks are well lit;
- walls, fences, open space and landscaping are sited so as to eradicate blind spots.

The Council will liaise with the Police Architectural Liaison Officer on proposals which are likely to provide opportunities for crime.

There may be a need to add security features to buildings in the form of shutters to shop windows. Where security measures may be required, these should be designed as an integral feature of the shopfront. A reasonable degree of visibility through security shutters should normally be maintained.

viii. Access for the Less Mobile

While there is concern to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are met, consideration should be given to all who are restricted in their mobility for example elderly people, or parents with children in prams and pushchairs. Reference is made to this issue in specific sections of the Plan, for example housing and transport, but all types of development should take account of the need to be accessible to as many people as possible. This includes parking areas and the routes to buildings, access into

buildings of all types and open space, and the design of footpaths and roads.

ix. Art

An element which can add to the quality and appeal of an area is public art, specifically features incorporated into public spaces. Where significant or large scale development is to take place, developers should take into account the potential for improving amenity and character which is offered by the appropriate use of sculptures and other elements of art.

x. Wildlife Habitats

Nature conservation can be a significant material consideration in determining many planning applications and the wildlife of the Borough is not confined solely to the statutorily designated nature conservation sites. The Council recognises that the key to the conservation of wildlife is the protection of the habitat on which it depends and, in line with Government advice, it seeks to take account of nature conservation interests wherever relevant in local decisions. Wildlife habitats can often be protected by carefully siting development so as to minimise its impact.

xi. Public Rights of Way

Most rights of way are now used principally for recreational purposes and constitute a valuable resource which is being enjoyed by a large and increasing number of people. The Borough has an extensive public rights of way network which allows for a quick escape from the built-up areas to the peace of the countryside. This network is one of the main environmental assets of the area, especially for those who do not have access to a car and cannot go further afield.

~~Policy GP I~~

~~PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT WILL BE ASSESSED IN RELATION TO THE POLICIES OF THE CLEVELAND STRUCTURE PLAN AND THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA AS APPROPRIATE:~~

- ~~(i.) THE EXTERNAL APPEARANCE OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SURROUNDING AREA;~~
- ~~(ii.) THE EFFECT ON THE AMENITIES OF THE OCCUPIERS OF NEARBY PROPERTIES;~~
- ~~(iii.) THE PROVISION OF SATISFACTORY ACCESS AND PARKING ARRANGEMENTS;~~
- ~~(iv.) THE CONTRIBUTION OF EXISTING TREES AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES;~~
- ~~(v.) THE NEED FOR A HIGH STANDARD OF LANDSCAPING;~~
- ~~(vi.) THE DESIRE TO REDUCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CRIME;~~
- ~~(vii.) THE INTENTION TO MAKE DEVELOPMENT AS ACCESSIBLE AS POSSIBLE TO EVERYONE;~~
- ~~(viii.) THE QUALITY, CHARACTER AND SENSITIVITY OF EXISTING LANDSCAPES AND BUILDINGS;~~
- ~~(ix.) THE EFFECT UPON WILDLIFE HABITATS;~~
- ~~(x.) THE EFFECT UPON THE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK~~

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