

Flintshire County Council – LDP Examination in Public

Opening Statement by the Council

My Name is Andy Roberts and I am a Chartered Town Planner. I am the Council's Service Manager Strategy and as part of that remit, I manage the team that is responsible for producing the Council's Local Development Plan.

I will be accompanied at hearing sessions by my colleagues Adrian Walters, Vicky Weale, Rachel Richardson and Terry Stevens as necessary. In addition, other specialist Council officers may support myself and policy colleagues at sessions to assist the Inspectors in responding to any technical matters or questions that arise. Equally, external consultants, advisors, or agents who have advised the Council on aspects of its evidence base or who have an interest in sites in the plan, may assist and support the Council at appropriate sessions.

The Council's Local Development Plan covers the period 2015 – 2030 and was approved for Submission for Examination by the Council on 29th September 2020, and subsequently submitted for Examination to Welsh Government and the Planning Inspectorate on 30th October 2020. Submission was formally acknowledged by the Planning Inspectorate on 11th November 2020 and the Examination therefore began at that point.

Notwithstanding the matters to be examined and the representors who wish to be heard, the Council considers that the Plan submitted for examination is sound and capable of being adopted, thereby updating the policy framework with which to guide where development takes place, and also form the up-to-date basis for making decision on planning applications.

The plan has been prepared in accordance with the statutory procedures under section 64(5) (a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) and associated Regulations, has had regard to national policy, guidance, and legislation including the Well Being of Future Generations Act, and in particular is in conformity with the recently

released Planning Policy Wales 11 (PPW11), the Development Plans Manual (edition 3), as well as being in general conformity with the National Development Plan, Future Wales.

It is considered that the LDP strategy provides the basis for Flintshire to make an appropriate contribution in the context of the national growth envisaged for North Wales, and the forthcoming requirement for a Strategic Development Plan in North Wales is the proper context to consider this wider future growth context both quantitatively and spatially.

The plan is informed by a robust and comprehensive evidence base and has assessed reasonable alternatives to inform its strategy and selection of sustainable sites. An extensive and inclusive programme of engagement and consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders and members of the public, and proper regard has been had to the comments, feedback and representations submitted to the Council during informal and formal engagement and consultation events. As a result of this process, none of the statutory consultees fundamentally object to the plan, and the Welsh Government have also confirmed that they have no fundamental concerns with regard to the soundness of the LDP.

In terms of the performance of the plan to date in delivering its housing requirement figure, the plan is on track and in the first five years of the plan period is delivering at or indeed slightly ahead of the annual rate of provision envisaged. The Council has produced an updated housing trajectory that demonstrates this as well as confirming the plan can continue to provide sufficient housing to meet the requirement throughout the remaining plan period via deliverable allocations, with flexibility now at 18%.

Finally, the Council has prepared statements for each hearing session that respond to the matters raised by the Inspectors. Where appropriate these summarise and link to the justification and supporting evidence that demonstrate that the LDP meets the tests of soundness.

The Council will continue to do all it can to assist the Inspectors with the smooth running of the examination.