

Tewkesbury Borough Council Examination in Public, opening statement.

16th February 2021.

My name is Sandra Ford, Head of Development Services at Tewkesbury Borough Council. I would like to welcome everyone here today to the start of our virtual examination into the Tewkesbury Borough Council Local Plan. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Inspector, Programme Officer and our IT colleagues who have worked hard to ensure the virtual examination can take place.

The team representing the Council over the course of the examination will be led by Jo Symons, planning policy manager. They will be joined throughout the proceedings by Mr Rob Jameson, a specialist Town and Country Planning solicitor with particular experience in Local Plan examinations for Local Planning Authorities. Additionally, other Planning officers and consultants will appear to support the Plan's provisions.

Tewkesbury Borough Council is pleased to have submitted the Local Plan for examination after extensive work with members of the Council to achieve policies and proposals that reflect the needs of the Borough. The plan has been subject to extensive consultation and engagement over the past few years which has resulted in the Plan that has now been submitted, in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and the Plan production process has followed the Adopted Local Development Scheme.

This is a Part 2 plan, which sets out the vision up to 2031 and provides a strategy for achieving it in accordance with the overarching direction provided by the Part 1 plan (the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, Joint Core Strategy), which was adopted in December 2017. It will thus be part of a suite of Plans, including 'made' Neighbourhood Plans, which together will comprise the Development Plan for the District.

The examination into the Local Plan is not an opportunity to review the strategic policies or to review the strategic housing numbers set out in the adopted Joint Core Strategy. These issues will be considered in the review of the Joint Core Strategy, the next stage, in that process is the Regulation 18 consultation scheduled to be held in the summer of this year. The timetable for the remaining stages of the review are as follows.

- Pre-Submission Consultation – Winter 2022
- Submission to the Secretary of State – Spring 2023
- Examination – Summer 2023
- Adoption – Winter 2023

The Vision for the borough as set out in the Local Plan is:

“Tewkesbury borough, a place where a good quality of life is open to all, where our environment and heritage assets are cherished, a sufficient supply of homes is available and where a thriving economy supports healthy and happy communities”.

To achieve this the submitted plan allocates new sites for development around Tewkesbury town, rural service centres and service villages to ensure that our growth requirements, as set out in the Joint Core Strategy continue to be met.

The submitted plan contains locally specific policies and sites for:

- Housing in towns, villages, and rural areas.
- Local employment, retail and town centre boundaries.
- Places of distinctiveness.
- The countryside; and
- Those parts of the Borough that will be subject to development restrictions.

Tewkesbury Borough Council over the past few years has consistently been one of the fastest growing districts outside of London. The adoption of this plan will provide certainty to the residents of the Borough and the development community of the commitment to good plan making. The submitted plan is considered sound as it has been positively prepared, is justified, effective and in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

If, however during the course of the examination the Inspector considers that main modifications are required to the plan in order for it to be made sound I would formally request that the Inspector makes the necessary recommendations to the Council.

To conclude, the Council considers that the Plan provides a sound and positive set of policies to complement those in the Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy, adopted in 2017 and is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework of February 2019.