

3 THE PREFERRED OPTION

INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 An important element in preparing the Local Development Framework (LDF) is the identification and testing of a number of different policy options. These options are tested against the sustainability objectives of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA). In this way it is possible to develop the spatial vision and strategy required to deliver Middlesbrough's growth in a sustainable way. From this, a preferred option is identified which will provide the framework for developing the policy options, not only within this Core Strategy, but also the other Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that will comprise the LDF.
- 3.2 The selection of options to appraise has been decided having regard to a number of factors. These include matters such as national and regional planning policy as expressed in Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) and the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). There are also a number of regional and sub-regional initiatives that have a direct bearing upon the choice and form of the Spatial Strategy. These initiatives include the city region, Stockton-Middlesbrough Initiative (SMI) and Housing Market Renewal (HMR).
- 3.3 These options were considered at a SA workshop in July 2005.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PREFERRED OPTION

The options

- 3.4 Four strategic options were considered for the development of the spatial strategy.
- 1 Development led by the market.
 - 2 Development focused upon renewal of existing communities.
 - 3 Development focused on the provision of one large mixed use community providing a mix of housing types.
 - 4 Development focused on the provision of dispersed mixed use communities.
- 3.5 A number of the strategic options could entail significant residential development on one or more sites. It was therefore decided to assess a number of strategic locations for meeting the housing requirement identified in the emerging RSS. This

assessment examined the creation of sustainable communities focused on:

- regeneration of Middlehaven;
- regeneration of inner Middlesbrough;
- creation of a sustainable urban extension centred on Hemlington Grange;
- creation of a sustainable urban extension centred on Nunthorpe/Poole Hospital; and
- creation of a sustainable urban extension centred on Stainton/Brookfield.

- 3.6 A further workshop session explored the SMI and how it could be delivered in a sustainable way to achieve the desired objectives of the SMI, RSS, and city region concept.

Assessment of the options

Option 1: Development led by the market.

- 3.7 The location and type of development to be delivered under this option would be determined by the market. Such an approach is unlikely to deliver the level of investment necessary to meet the development and infrastructure requirements of those areas in greatest need. It is likely to place greater pressure for development in those areas where there is already significant levels of development and development pressure. Following such a strategy would exacerbate the problems of housing market renewal, would be unlikely to satisfactorily address the issues facing Middlesbrough and lead to unsustainable patterns of development. Such an approach would also be contrary to national and regional policy.
- 3.8 The Council consider that this option should not be pursued further.

Option 2: Development focused on renewal of existing communities.

- 3.9 This option would see development focused on the regeneration of areas of significant deprivation and bringing forward of previously developed land. Such an approach has the benefit of ensuring that virtually all development would occur on previously developed land. The regeneration of deprived areas provides an opportunity to address the causes of

deprivation and to create sustainable communities where people wish to live and work. This can be achieved through diversifying housing type and tenure and improving quality and energy efficiency. There will also be opportunities to improve the local environment in terms of providing quality green spaces, and reducing opportunities for crime and the fear of crime. Regeneration of these areas will also enable new, much needed infrastructure requirements to be incorporated into the local community.

3.10 Concentrating all Middlesbrough’s growth in these areas has its disadvantages. These areas would not be capable of accommodating all of Middlesbrough’s growth requirements. It is also unlikely that development in these areas would address issues such as stemming population loss. Traditionally these are areas of quite dense development. Whilst it is unlikely that all housing stock will be replaced, a significant proportion will need to be and will be done so at lower densities. These densities will still meet PPG3 requirements. To accommodate the required number of dwellings other sites outside of these communities will need to be identified, and some may potentially be greenfield sites. It is also questionable that such an option would provide the necessary choice of dwelling types and locations to meet the needs of Middlesbrough’s current and future population.



An artist's impression of possible development at Middlehaven

- 3.11 Development of these areas will potentially involve the displacement of some households, and some level of housing clearance. It is necessary to have sufficient housing stock in place to accommodate the displaced occupants. Clearance and replacement takes time to achieve, and it is improbable that this can be undertaken at a rate that meets the requirements of the emerging RSS. There are also short-term issues caused by population loss out of these areas during regeneration which may impact upon the viability of already precarious facilities such as local schools. Any regeneration activities will need to be carefully managed and phased.
- 3.12 Whilst this option presents significant sustainability gains, and will help focus development to those areas it is most needed, it raises a number of issues that would need to be addressed.

Option 3: Development focused on the provision of one large mixed use community providing a mix of housing types.

- 3.13 This option explores the development needs of Middlesbrough through the creation of one large sustainable community, incorporating employment, leisure, retail and housing development, and utilising greenfield land as required.
- 3.14 This option has a number of advantages. The creation of a single large mixed use community would enable a development incorporating sustainability principles in its design and construction from the outset. A critical mass could be achieved for the development that would allow innovative energy efficiency and other sustainability concepts such as the use of CHP to be integrated into the development. A certain size of development is also necessary to attract investment in different types of infrastructure. It would also be possible to create a sustainable community of mixed tenures and dwelling types.
- 3.15 A single large mixed use community which met all of Middlesbrough’s development requirements would not be possible. For a scheme of this scale it would need to be identified through the RSS. The only site identified in the RSS is Greater Middlehaven. Whilst this is capable of meeting a significant level of the growth needed it cannot



accommodate it all. The scale of development proposed for Middlesbrough could only be achieved on a single site through the use of a significant level of greenfield land. This is unsustainable and would be contrary to meeting brownfield targets identified in the emerging RSS and national policy.

- 3.16 It is not desirable to create a single large mixed use community as it would not address the issues facing Middlesbrough. Whilst it may help to stem population growth, it does not tackle the problems of housing market renewal or deprivation in the inner urban areas. The decline of these areas is likely to be hastened.
- 3.17 Whilst there may be a role for the creation of one or more large mixed use communities this needs to be seen within the context of assisting with tackling problems of deprivation, housing market renewal and regeneration of the inner areas.

Option 4: Development focused on the provision of dispersed mixed use communities.

- 3.18 This option would result in the development needed to meet Middlesbrough's growth being dispersed on a range of brownfield and greenfield sites throughout the town. Priority would be given to brownfield sites that deliver regeneration benefits.
- 3.19 By prioritising brownfield sites, and those that assist with regeneration, this option provides a sustainable solution to accommodating Middlesbrough's growth. Dispersal of development could, however, result in an unsustainable pattern of development that could result in longer and more car trips and poorer access to key facilities. It is unlikely that dispersal of development will be able to achieve the critical mass required to be viable for the provision of new infrastructure or facilities, and may not be sufficient to attract the necessary investment to assist with regeneration and renewal.
- 3.20 Dispersal may provide an opportunity to provide a range of sites increasing housing choice, but there is concern that the fragmented nature of dispersed sites may work against the objective of ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent and affordable home.

- 3.21 This option has some positive sustainability benefits and will help to address some of the issues facing Middlesbrough. By itself it cannot deliver the required level of growth in Middlesbrough and if it is to be pursued will need to form part of a wider strategy.

Sustainable urban extension

- 3.22 A number of the options refer to the creation of a single large mixed use community on either previously developed land or a greenfield location. It was felt appropriate as part of this process to examine which of the possible locations would be the preferred one for a sustainable urban extension. The three locations considered were:
 - a land between Stainton and Brookfield;
 - b land at Hemlington Grange; and
 - c land between Nunthorpe and Poole Hospital.
- 3.23 Each of the three locations was assessed, as part of the sustainability appraisal workshop held in July 2005, against the sustainability objectives. The findings of this workshop are contained within the sustainability appraisal scoping report.
- 3.24 This process demonstrated that all three locations would have a negative impact upon the use of natural resources, in particular greenfield land. Development of the scale envisaged as part of an urban extension will require a significant amount of greenfield land. Even the development at Hemlington Grange, which will utilise some previously developed land, will still require development on some greenfield land. In this context Hemlington Grange is the most sustainable.
- 3.25 The fact that all three locations will involve development on greenfield land means that each will entail some visual impact upon the landscape. Land between Poole Hospital and Nunthorpe is located within a Special Landscape Area and as such development here is likely to have an unacceptable impact upon the rural landscape. The area between Stainton and Brookfield is part of a Green Wedge, so designated in order to prevent the coalescence of the urban areas and protect local identity. Development in this location would also be highly visible and would impact upon the setting of Stainton village. There is a ridge line to



the south of the Hemlington Grange site that can act as a visual barrier when viewing the development from the south. It is also probably the least attractive of the three areas both visually and in terms of its contribution to providing a landscape setting to Middlesbrough.

- 3.26 All three locations would need to undergo an ecological survey to determine any bio-diversity interest. Of the three locations, Hemlington Grange was considered at the workshop to have the least bio-diversity interest as it is largely covered by poor grassland with low wildlife potential.
- 3.27 Accessibility to local facilities is an important sustainability consideration. Only the development at Hemlington Grange is within convenient and easy walking and cycling distance to existing facilities at either the Viewley Centre or Coulby Newham District Centre, including shops, schools (primary and secondary), leisure, and employment amongst others.
- 3.28 The location between Stainton and Brookfield is well located in terms of accessing the strategic highway network, being adjacent to the junction of the B1380 with the A174, and close proximity to the A19. Hemlington Grange is also well located to access the strategic highway network, but is slightly further away. Whilst development between Poole Hospital and Nunthorpe could also access the strategic highway network via the A172 and A174 junction, it would result in a significant amount of traffic being placed upon the Marton Road, A172, which is already highly congested at peak times.
- 3.29 By the nature of its accessibility to local facilities, development at Hemlington Grange is also well located to take advantage of a good public transport system, and contribute to an improved level of service. Hemlington Grange is also the only location where it would be possible to link the development of the site directly to the regeneration of a deprived area. By ensuring that the development of Hemlington Grange is integrated with the regeneration of the Hemlington Estate it will be possible to ensure that people living in the area have access to local job opportunities, improved education and recreation facilities, and access to improved high quality and affordable housing.

- 3.30 The general consensus at the sustainability workshop was that, if a location for a strategic urban extension had to be found, development of Hemlington Grange would be preferable to the other two. Not only would development here have lesser negative impacts than the other sites, but it also has the added benefit of being able to deliver a comprehensive regeneration package when considered alongside the regeneration of the Hemlington Estate.

PREFERRED OPTION

- 3.31 The preferred option is based largely upon option 2 but includes elements of 3 and 4. The majority of development is focused upon previously developed land in the north of the town, Greater Middlehaven, Middlesbrough town centre, and the Riverside and East Middlesbrough Industrial Estates. This is complemented by the regeneration of Greater Hemlington, including the development of Hemlington Grange, to create a sustainable mixed use community on the southern edge of the town (options 3, 4). The strategy also focuses on the regeneration of a number of communities within the town, but well located to the town centre and not dispersed across the town – Gresham/Middlehaven, North Ormesby, Whinney Banks and Grove Hill (option 2).
- 3.32 This provides the framework for developing the policies within this Core Strategy.

4 SPATIAL VISION AND OBJECTIVES

SPATIAL VISION

4.1 Central to the Core Strategy is the long-term spatial vision that will create the framework for the development of the policies and proposals to be included in the LDF. This vision should emphasise local distinctiveness with a focus upon delivery. It will need to give expression to other strategies and

programmes, including regeneration, economic development, transport, education, housing, health, waste, energy, recycling, environmental protection and culture. This vision has been derived from the aspirations expressed in the Community Strategy. It also draws upon the SA/SEA of the Issues and Options Report and baseline study.

IN 2021...

- the population is growing, and increasingly diverse. Many more families now remain in the area, attracted by the wide range of housing opportunities in safe, secure neighbourhoods and by the quality of schools. There is now a net in migration of people moving into the town to live;
- cultural and ethnic diversity and quality of life ensure that Middlesbrough is a magnet for creative people. The number of University of Teesside graduates who stay in Middlesbrough on leaving higher education has doubled;
- inward investment has increased and resulted in companies and government departments relocating from the south east into the town and wider city region;
- efforts to create a market for city living and to radically enhance the cultural and educational infrastructure have been critical. This is primarily a result of the success in achieving economic growth and diversification. Full employment has just been achieved – creating many new jobs in financial and business services in the digital/creative industries, and in advanced engineering and manufacturing;
- Middlesbrough's role as the sub-regional shopping centre for Tees Valley, has been reinforced and strengthened. It is the north east's fastest growing retail centre and has attracted a diverse mix of quality multiple retailers and specialist independents. In 2015 Middlesbrough's fifth shopping centre opened;
- Middlesbrough is now recognised as one of the North of England's top five cultural destinations. mima has developed an international reputation for contemporary programming of the visual arts. Restored to their original glory, the Empire Theatre and Town Hall provide a diverse mix of the performing arts. All three are rooted in the community and have served as a strong catalyst for the development of the arts and creative industries in Middlesbrough – and for the diversification of the evening economy;
- schools, further and higher education facilities have been modernised and now compare favourably to the best in the North of England. Middlesbrough College has further expanded its campus at Middlehaven and the University of Teesside has developed a series of major new buildings on campus, including the Institute of Digital Innovation;
- communities are truly sustainable as a result of massive investment programmes in improving social housing, clearance of obsolete stock and the provision of new family housing and city living opportunities. People want to live here – neighbourhoods are safe, secure and well managed. Housing markets are buoyant;
- the regeneration of the Tees Corridor between Stockton town centre and Teesport, in accordance with the proposals identified in the SMI, is well underway. Middlehaven is connected with and complements the town

IN 2021... (continued)

centre and is a vibrant, mixed use quarter containing many new homes, offices and leisure facilities. The revitalisation of the waterfront has extended westwards;

- Riverside Park has expanded, providing new industrial and business accommodation, and the adjoining South West Ironmasters site and the Tees Marshalling Yards are being developed;
- Middlesbrough is at the heart of a connected city region transport network. The public transport system has been transformed; new fast rail services to Newcastle and Darlington are complemented by a high quality guided bus system, which provides direct services between central Middlesbrough and many of its neighbourhoods. Over 50% of residents travel to work, learning or leisure, using public transport. The capacities of the A19 and A174 have been expanded to cater for growth;
- with Stockton, Middlesbrough is providing city-scale infrastructure, services and facilities for a catchment population of more than 1 million people across Tees Valley, County Durham and North Yorkshire. The vibrant culture, sustainable communities, housing choice and first class health and educational facilities have made Middlesbrough and Stockton a truly competitive urban core of the city region;
- the successful regeneration of Greater Hemlington has created a modern, vibrant, and sustainable urban village that has a buoyant housing market; and
- the role of Middlesbrough and Stockton at the centre of the Tees Valley city region is further enhanced by the high quality of both its built and natural environments. This is exemplified by the high quality landscape setting to development created by improvements to the waterfront and the extension of water into the urban area.



A visionary look for the SMI area



SPATIAL OBJECTIVES

- 4.2 These objectives indicate how the spatial vision will be delivered. Many of these objectives are identified as priorities in the Community Strategy. They have also been informed by the SA/SEA of the Issues and Options Report.

SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 1

Recognise the Tees Valley city region and identify the SMI as the location to provide a dynamic city-scale urban centre for the city region and its economy.

The Tees Valley city region is identified as one of eight city regions in the Northern Way. As such it is an important driver in the Government's proposals to accelerate economic growth across the north and deliver greater economic prosperity. The SMI will be an important mechanism in the delivery of the city region concept. The objective will be achieved by ensuring that priority is given to investment and development opportunities that contribute to the creation of an urban centre of city-scale in a sustainable way. Delivery of this objective will require close working between Middlesbrough and Stockton to ensure that the two centres and the river corridor between them are developed in a complementary way to create a more competitive urban centre. There are also important linkages along the river corridor with Teesport, which need to be fostered and supported to assist with the achievement of this objective. This will involve working closely with Redcar & Cleveland Council to ensure an appropriate level and form of development along the corridor. It will also be necessary to ensure that appropriate policies are included within the LDF.



Middlesbrough's busy town centre

SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 2

Reinforce Middlesbrough town centre as the principal retail centre for the Tees Valley city region and the Stockton-Middlesbrough urban core as the principal centre for cultural, leisure, and civic administration activities.

To achieve this it will be necessary to identify opportunities for the town centre to grow. This will be achieved through rationalisation of existing land uses within the centre, and the identification of Cannon Park as an area into which the centre can expand to accommodate future planned growth. Opportunities created through the regeneration of Middlehaven will also be important in the delivery of this objective.



SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 3

To stabilise then reverse population decline through the creation of sustainable communities that create an environment attractive to retaining the existing population and attracting people back into the town.

This is also one of the aspirations of the Community Strategy. Stabilising then increasing the level of population within the town is essential if Middlesbrough is to develop its role, with Stockton, at the heart of the Tees Valley city region. An increase in population will help to support and improve viability of local services such as schools and shops. The objective will be achieved through a combination of providing housing in locations, and of the type, that people want, and through improvements to the local environment and investment in facilities and infrastructure. Protection of environmental assets will be integral to achieving this objective and ensuring a high quality of life is achieved. Developments at Hemlington Grange and Middlehaven are central to the delivery of this objective. It will be necessary to develop a multi-agency approach to create, and take forward, area frameworks for those parts of the town where intervention is necessary in order to achieve this objective.

SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 5

Create a balanced housing stock that meets the needs of Middlesbrough's population both now and in the future.

To address the issue of population decline and to further the prosperous growth of Middlesbrough to the benefit of the city region it is important that the town has a balanced housing stock in terms of type, size and tenure. This will involve joint working with neighbouring authorities to address the cross-boundary housing market issues. Eighty eight per cent of all housing in Middlesbrough is in Council Tax band C or below. The diversification of the housing stock will be achieved through new developments such as those at Greater Middlehaven and Greater Hemlington, and through the regeneration of those areas where housing market failure has been at its worst. All developments will need to contribute to the achievement of a balanced housing stock.

SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 4

Protect Middlesbrough's historic assets.

Middlesbrough has few historic sites, so what are left take on an added significance. This will be achieved by ensuring that criteria are contained within policies that protect Middlesbrough's historic assets and, where possible, maximises their contribution to achieving a sustainable environment.



The Turnstile, Ayresome - successful inner housing

SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 6

Deliver major regeneration schemes at Greater Middlehaven and Greater Hemlington to create sustainable communities that will make a significant contribution to Middlesbrough's role within the Tees Valley city region.

Middlehaven has been identified as a priority for the Council and its partners. Successful regeneration of the area will be integral to the development of Middlesbrough as part of the heart of a successful Tees Valley city region. Hemlington Grange will enable a high quality, high value residential development to be created within a high quality environmental setting, whilst at the same time contributing to the regeneration of the wider Hemlington area, making this in turn a more attractive and sustainable living environment. An important consideration to be addressed within the LDF is the relationship between the two developments, and how they can be progressed within the constraints placed on house building rates by the RSS. In both schemes the protection and enhancement of environmental assets is seen as integral to achieving a high quality of life.



The University of Teesside gateway

SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 7

Establish an environment that encourages and supports economic vitality and quality of life that attracts both people and businesses to Middlesbrough.

This is an aspiration of the Community Strategy and will be delivered through the LDF by creating a policy framework and identifying development opportunities that maximises the potential for economic growth. It will be achieved through developments such as Greater Middlehaven and Greater Hemlington that will create attractive and high quality environments.

SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 8

Improve connectivity within Middlesbrough, the Tees Valley city region and to other regions.

Poor connectivity is seen as a barrier to growth in the Tees Valley city region. Successful regeneration and delivery of many of the priorities of the Council and its partners will require investment in the transport network and infrastructure. This will involve working with developers, Tees Valley Regeneration, neighbouring authorities, transport providers and operators, and the Highways Agency, to focus activity on:

- improving the rail and bus network;
- improving inter urban transport links between Middlesbrough and its neighbours, particularly Stockton town centre, and Teesport;
- improving the strategic network, in particular the A66 and A19 trunk roads; and
- improving access, particularly by public transport, to key regeneration projects.

SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 9

Achieve high and sustainable levels of economic growth by supporting existing businesses and encouraging new ones to set up in Middlesbrough.

This will be achieved through identifying suitable sites for economic development and a policy framework that facilitates economic growth. Sites that will be identified within the LDF include Greater Middlehaven, Greater Hemlington, Riverside Park, and the town centre. Achievement of this objective needs to be seen in the context of taking forward complementary proposals within the Stockton and Middlesbrough areas to create a single competitive urban core.

SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 10

To reduce the amount of waste produced in Middlesbrough and increase the amount that is recycled.

It will be necessary for the LDF to identify mechanisms for reducing waste and, where necessary, sites for new waste facilities to meet the waste management targets and apportionments identified in the RSS. Detailed policies regarding waste matters will be included in a Tees Valley Waste and Minerals DPD to be prepared jointly by the Tees Valley authorities.

SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 11

To protect the rural landscape and urban townscape from inappropriate development whilst encouraging modern innovative design.

The design of new development will need to be responsive to its context and setting, yet not repeating examples of poor design. Development will also need to make the best use of the land required to be developed, be accessible to all sections of the community, maximise energy efficiency and minimise pollution and waste. Poor design in any situation will not be acceptable.

SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 12

maximises the benefits to be gained from natural resources, including the leisure and regeneration potential of water assets such as the Tees corridor, and the protection of areas of bio-diversity and natural beauty.

One of the themes of the Community Strategy is improving the local environment. The protection of Middlesbrough's natural assets is an important strand in delivering the priorities associated with this theme. Opportunities will be sought to increase the bio-diversity resource, and expand the green network. The Council will work closely with its partners such as the Wildlife Trust and Groundwork to achieve this objective. Creation of the Green Blue Heart as part of the SMI, improvements to Riverside Park and the redevelopment of Middlehaven, will help maximise the regeneration potential of the River Tees and assist in delivering a city-scale landscape appropriate to Middlesbrough's role alongside Stockton at the centre of the Tees Valley city region.



SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 13

To establish an environment that enables residents to improve their quality of life through the provision of accessible and high quality education and health facilities.

This is a priority of the Community Strategy. Accessibility planning will be used to ensure that facilities are located so that they are accessible to the population that they intend to serve. The Council will work with its partners to ensure that all facilities are of a high quality and meet the needs of the population and that high standards of health and education attainment are achieved. This will include working with:

- Middlesbrough College to facilitate its proposals for relocation to Middlehaven and improvements to its education offer;
- University of Teesside to enable its continued expansion and growth and helping to ensure that the local and wider Tees Valley economies benefit from its continued success; and
- the Primary Care Trust in identifying a site for a new community hospital.

Rationalisation of primary school provision in East Middlesbrough will help to deliver better, more focused education facilities to that part of the town, and the Building Schools for the Future programme will result in a higher standard of education in improved facilities at secondary school level.

SPATIAL OBJECTIVE 14

To ensure that Middlesbrough has a network of accessible, high quality greenspaces and sport and recreation facilities that meet local needs and enhance the 'livability' of the town, promote sustainability, support bio-diversity and makes the best use of land.

It will be necessary for the LDF to include an open space strategy that will assist in the delivery of an effective and high quality open space network. An over-riding policy priority should be to enhance existing provision where it is of value to local communities or serves a wider purpose, such as supporting wildlife and bio-diversity or performing a strategic function. Opportunities to rationalise some existing spaces by changing their nature in order to meet local needs better, or to dispose of some sites in order to concentrate available revenue resources on driving up the quality of other spaces and facilities will also need to be considered.



An artist's impression of proposed development at Middlehaven