

## Briefing Note

To: Cllr Nedved, Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Housing

From: Neil Cole, Head of Planning Policy

Date: 12 January 2021

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### Report to Executive 13 January 2021 : St Cuthbert's Garden Village Local Plan Consultation (Report Item 1/21) - Update Note

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#### Purpose of Report

1. This note supplements the above Report and updates the Executive regarding the high level outcomes the St Cuthbert's Garden Village Local Plan (SCGV LP) consultation.

#### Background

2. Subsequent to the deadline for the submission of Reports to the January 2021 Executive, the SCGV LP's 6 week consultation concluded on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020. Extensions of time were agreed with the Parish Councils for St Cuthbert's Without and St Cuthbert's until 13 January. As is normal with consultations of this nature, the bulk of the responses were received in the final days of the consultation. Accordingly, Section 3 to the Report could only summarise the issues received at the point of writing.
3. Comments were invited regarding the policies and proposals within the SCGV LP alongside a series of wider structured questions relating to the policies.

#### Main Issues Arising from the Local Plan Consultation

4. In total, some 67 individuals and organisations submitted comments through letters and emails and a further 60 responded to the structured questions. The principle issues arising from the consultation are discussed below.
5. **Policy 1 Delivering St Cuthbert's:** Some contest the number of homes proposed is more than is required, whilst St Cuthbert's Without P.C. suggests future housing need should be evidence led and given the current uncertainties should prioritise the regeneration issues within the city first. Greater clarity is required to control piecemeal proposals whilst still encouraging the early release of land for development. The policy should provide flexibility regarding the mix and quantum of homes required. Support is given to allocate employment land to the east of Junction 42 to re-balance the employment land portfolio across the district. The Plan should recognise that a substantial land would remain in agricultural use hence development should not adversely impact on current and future agricultural activities. Several landowners suggest a phased release of land and request additional parcels of land are also allocated for development purposes. The phasing of sites should remain flexible and respond to evidence on the need and timing of supporting infrastructure.

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6. **Policy 2 Planning Obligations:** this policy should be evidenced by a whole plan viability assessment and an up to date infrastructure delivery plan that provides a clear mechanism to secure contributions based upon the infrastructure required such as healthcare, community hubs and schools, shops and supermarkets, wastewater, and electricity playing pitches and sports facilities. It is suggested the policy provides greater clarity regarding forward funding of proposals and dealing with land in multiple ownerships. St Cuthbert's Without PC suggest this should be delivered by a strategic developer
7. **Policy 4 Stewardship:** whilst supported, more detail is required as to the arrangements through which it will be applied. Others suggest the policy does not become overly prescriptive, given there are many ways to deliver infrastructure and ensure its effectively managed and maintained in the long term.
8. **Policy 5 Affordable Housing:** some contend a 20% affordable housing requirement is too high and must be informed by viability. The policy should be applied flexibly across all development phases and clarify the mix of affordable homes required. Others suggest the quantum of affordable housing should not be undermined by viability and a strategic developer could control the site releases to those who deliver against all objectives.
9. **Policy 6 Low Carbon Development:** There is support for the greater integration of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures into the Policy including electric vehicle charging points and energy efficient homes. Others object to the potential inclusion of the Government's proposals for energy efficiency standards (the Future Homes Standard) and the implications this would have on development viability.
10. **Policy 7 Sustainable Transport and Movement:** The focus given to active and sustainable travel is supported with particular emphasis given to the future role of public transport and its integration with wider initiatives for the City centre. Specific suggestions are raised in connection to the potential for park and ride at Durdar; including charging point infrastructure for buses and to the potential re-routing of buses. Further suggested amendments require the policy provides further clarity following completion of additional evidence relating to transport and movement. Concerns are however raised to ensure the plan remains inflexible to respond to changes as the GV is built out.
11. **Policy 8 Strategic Design:** Whilst supported in principle, clarity is required as to its relationship to the wider design based policies and guidance and its cross reference to the design requirements for the 3 villages as set out within the Draft Strategic Design SPD.
12. **Policy 9 Smart Environments:** Whilst there is in principle support, technical points are raised as to its implementation including the capacity of the internet network.
13. **Policy 10 Biodiversity Net Gain:** Is supported by a number of respondents including Natural England, who suggest additional wording to make it stronger. Support is given to the enhancement of biodiversity within the site alongside suggestions to the potential to realign parts of the proposed Greenway corridor to provide better connections. However, others contend the enabling legislation (through the emerging Environment Bill) is not in place to justify a 10% minimum biodiversity net gain requirement.
14. **Policy 11 Self and Custom Build Housing:** there are concerns that the policy could become too restrictive and that clarity is required as to how the policy would work in those circumstances where plots have been marketed for a 12 month period and there has been no take up.

15. **Cummersdale:** A number of specific objections from local residents were submitted by Cummersdale residents regarding:
- The need for the homes and the scale of growth proposed is disproportionate to the size of the village
  - The need for the CSLR which would lead to higher levels of traffic and pollution
  - The loss of greenfield land and long distance views to the Pennines and Lake District
  - The threat of increased flooding and the disturbance to wildlife and habitats
  - Disturbance to archaeological remains.
16. **Durdar:** Further objections from residents from the Stockwell Road Estate to the adjoining development proposals. Whilst some oppose new development in its totality, others support an alternative development configuration which provides a larger buffer between the existing and new homes. The main areas of concern relate to:
- The impacts of traffic growth and alignment of the road and in terms of health, air and noise pollution
  - The disturbance to wildlife and habitats
  - The close proximity of the new homes to existing homes and loss of greenery
  - The loss of a rural identity.
17. **Adequacy of the consultation:** concerns were raised as to the adequacy of the consultation against the backdrop of Covid-19, the reliance upon electronic means to view the documentation and the lack of opportunities to meet officers face to face.