
**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2019**

EGSP.07/19 ST. CUTHBERT'S GARDEN VILLAGE PROGRESS UPDATE

The Investment and Policy Manager submitted report ED.02/19 which updated the Panel on the work undertaken thus far in respect of the St Cuthbert's Garden Village project (SCGV). Garden Villages were part of a national government programme of increasing economic growth through the support of housing supply.

The project had been officially launched in 2018 and Officers had engaged in a range of activities including public consultations; development and submission of funding bids; discussions with relevant landowners and Stage 1 Masterplanning, as detailed in the report. More than 1,100 people had attended consultation events, and whilst a number of concerns had been identified, the overall response to the project had been positive.

The Council awaited decisions on whether government grants would be awarded for the Carlisle Southern Link Road and Capacity Funding for the project. The Investment and Policy Manager assured Members that in the event of monies for the Link Road not being secured, other sources would be investigated, and the SCGV project would continue.

The first stage of Masterplanning had focussed on the development of draft vision, principles and concepts had been completed and accepted by relevant stakeholders. The future St. Cuthbert's Garden Village Local Plan would consolidate those visions and principles into Council policy that would protect the Carlisle South area from piecemeal, disjointed development. Stage 2 Masterplanning activity would see the creation of more strategic aspects of the project including the identification of specific land parcels; movement strategy and; drainage strategy.

The Investment and Policy Manager hoped that a full Masterplan and draft Local Plan would be completed by the end of 2019. As well as the Stage 2 Masterplanning, work would be undertaken, by consultants on the viability of the project and the use of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to be rolled out across the district as a means of funding infrastructure within SCGV as well as the existing city.

The Corporate Director added that viability assessment was a critical friend to the project. It was feasible that a number of key facilities would be funded through the private sector, however, the public sector had an important role to play in the delivery of the project. Consideration would need to be given to the form and extent of the public sector's role in delivering St Cuthbert's Garden Village.

A report would be submitted to the 11 February 2019 meeting of the Executive containing indicative budgets and work plans, requesting formal approval to continue with the project.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder stated that although the report was not lengthy it captured the range of activity undertaken in the previous year and set out a programme of coming activity, she commended the work undertaken by the Officers and noted that the Council had sought to involve stakeholders and the public in the project.

In considering the report Members raised the following questions and concerns:

The Chairman thanked the Officers involved in the project for the work thus far on the project and the Councillors who sat on the Members' Advisory Group (MAG). He felt that communication with the wider Council was critical to ensure that Members were kept abreast of developments and suggested that the project be the subject of an Informal Council Briefing.

He welcomed the rebalancing of the city that the project would bring noting that the balance of infrastructure and housing development were critical to the long-term viability of the project. The Chairman stated that the Panel wished to see the feedback received during the consultation exercises and asked when it was able to be submitted to the Panel.

The Investment and Policy Manager advised that the feedback from first consultation exercise had been published on the Council's website and he anticipated that the next round's would be uploaded to the website in the coming week.

The Chairman further asked whether, in the event that the bids for the CSLR and capacity funding were not successful, the project remained viable.

The Investment and Policy Manager responded that were the funding not secured, the project would continue however, the timescales for the project would have to be reconsidered.

With reference to paragraph 3.16, a Member stated that as part of his work on the Member Advisory Group (MAG) that he had visited several Garden Village sites across the country and that each had a bespoke approach to the stewardship of place post construction which helped those areas to retain their attractive character. He sought assurance that this aspect of the SCGV was being considered as part of the development of the project.

The Corporate Director responded that the overall project was an iterative process and confirmed that post construction matters were being considered alongside the delivery of SCGV.

The Member agreed that the overall project was an iterative process but felt that there was a significant difference between leaseholder and freeholder arrangements in terms of capacity to steward the site in future.

- Why did the Council plan to produce a Development Plan for SCGV rather than a Neighbourhood Plan?

The Investment and Policy Manager explained that all Council's had a legal duty to determine planning applications in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material conditions indicated otherwise. The size and scale of SCGV, straddling two parishes, lent itself to a

Local Plan, rather than a Neighbourhood Plan, with Local Plans being subject to a more rigorous examination process. In order for the authority to hold developers to its vision and objectives for the SCGV, a separate, site specific Local Plan represented the best way forward.

The Corporate Director added that the SCGV Local Plan would incorporate relevant policies from the district wide Local Plan that had been approved by Council and would enable the Council to ensure that the development in the SCGV area adhered to the Council's principles.

Referring to paragraph 3.7 of the report, a Member noted that it was expected that the Draft Preferred Options for the SCGV Local Plan was due to be completed in late 2019, he sought clarification that applications for Planning Permission were either able to be held back or refused on the basis of the Masterplan?

The Investment and Policy Manager advised that there was an existing policy in the Local Plan – SP 3 – Broad Location for Growth: Carlisle South which contained wording that would enable the Council to preclude development that was not in line with the Local Plan. Adherence to the authority's Local Plan by developers was essential, unless there were material planning considerations indicated otherwise. Moreover, national planning policy allowed weight to be given to emerging Local Plans in the determination of planning applications, however, no application for a site within the area earmarked for the SCGV had been submitted, therefore the policy had not been tested.

- Did the Council intend to develop a Community Infrastructure Levy?

The Investment and Policy Manager explained that the government had latterly carried out a review of CIL and had considered replacing the Levy, but more recently it had decided to retain CIL. In order to adopt CIL, the Council needed to identify whether the Levy was the most appropriate mechanism for funding infrastructure at SCGV. It was felt that expert knowledge was required to progress the issue, therefore, a portion of the monies applied for with the Capacity Funding bid would be used to look into the matter, it was hoped that a draft policy would be developed by the end of 2019.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder commented that the inclusion of appropriate infrastructure, early in the development, was critical to the SCGV project, as such she felt that using experts to help the Council identify the most appropriate approach to realise that was a sensible way to progress the matter.

A Member asked, were the funding bid for the CSLR to be unsuccessful, whether the Council would look to implement CIL on a district wide basis as a means of funding the road?

The Investment and Policy Manager responded that to adopt CIL, the Council had to justify a need for it and ensure that it was viable, whether the monies raised from the Levy were used to fund infrastructure at SCGV or other infrastructure needs within the district was a decision for Council.

Responding to a Member's request for further detail on how the issue of CIL would be progressed, the Investment and Policy Manager advised that the work package on viability would be carried out along with work to undertake an updating of the infrastructure

requirements of the area. The data collated from that work would be used as the basis for a public consultation towards the end of the year.

The Corporate Director added that CIL would not apply to all areas of the district, due to viability issues. In response to a further question from a Member, she confirmed that any future CIL policy would undergo the usual democratic decision-making processes of scrutiny, Executive and Council.

- A number of Members sought clarification on the Environment Agency's involvement with the project to date.

The Corporate Director advised that the Environment Agency was a member of the SCGV Strategic Board, and as such it was expected that issues relating to the management of water through the SCGV area would be factored into the scheme in its developmental stages, for example the location of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), installation of rainwater harvesting devices etc. As a result, it was not anticipated that SCGV would impact on flood risk issues across the wider district.

- The affordability of housing units was important to the success of the project.

The Corporate Director agreed and noted that Officers had been in discussions with a number of housing providers and housing associations as it was important that the project offered a diverse range of housing to suit different needs and to ensure a diverse community in the area, post construction.

Another Member felt it was important that Social Housing were provided at SCGV.

The Corporate Director reiterated that the final scheme would comprise a mix of housing types including Social Housing.

- What was the extent of the Council's expenditure on the project to date?

The Corporate Director reported that work on the project thus far had been funded by grant awards from central government, with the Council contributing staff resource to carry out the work.

- A Member expressed concern that in delivering the project, the Council was not addressing the matter of the decline of the high street.

The Corporate Director responded that the Council had a suite of policies which aimed to increase the economic vitality of the area, such as the Economic Growth Strategy and the City Centre Masterplan. Housing supply was recognised as an essential element in creating sustainable future growth and the SCGV would contribute to the increase of units in the district.

In response to a further question about school provision in the city, the Corporate Director advised that Cumbria County Council, as Local Education Authority, was the responsible authority, however, the City Council was working with them to identify an appropriate site.

Details of school provision at SCGV were expected at the end of the second stage of Masterplanning.

- Had any ideas relating to community or cultural infrastructure been developed in the first phase of Masterplanning?

The Corporate Director agreed the need for the inclusion of community facilities proportionate to the size of the development were essential and indicated that aspect of project would be incorporated into the second stage of Masterplanning.

- Had areas for employment sites been identified?

The Corporate Director considered that businesses would likely to wish to be sited near the CSLR as it would provide ready accessibility to and from the motorway, although, specific sites had yet to be identified.

- Was SCGV being delivered on “green-belt” land?

The Corporate Director explained that the term “green-belt” was a legally defined term that pertained to a particular classification of land which did not exist in the district. The Council did have countryside areas within its boundaries and there were policies in the Local Plan which sought to protect those areas by ensuring any future development was suitable.

Responding to a further question from the Member regarding the extent of the SCGV area, the Investment and Policy Manager advised that concept planning documentation, including maps of the proposed areas, were available on the website.

- Were the Stage 1 Baseline intended deliverables of the Stage 2 Masterplanning (see page 31) meant only for SCGV or would other areas of the district be included?

The Investment and Policy Manager advised that it would be a mixture of both, for example the Desktop Air Quality Assessment would be district wide covering the key arterial routes linking SCGV with the City Centre, but the Archaeological Statement would be SCGV specific.

- A Member noted that the Panel’s Work Programme specified that the updated reports on the project be submitted bi-annually. He noted that identified project milestone did not always coincide with the six-monthly report timings and suggested that future reports be submitted to the Panel following the achievement of a project milestone or activity.

The Panel indicated its agreement.

The Chairman requested that the Panel be provided with a briefing note on CIL and its links to SCGV.

The Corporate Director suggested that it would be of greatest benefit for Members to consider the district wide CIL document and proposed to provide an “informative” on the topic, to the Panel, prior to the submission of a report on the policy.

RESOLVED – 1) That the St. Cuthbert's Garden Village Progress Update (ED.02/19) be received and welcomed.

2) That the St. Cuthbert's Garden Village be the subject of a future Informal Council Briefing.

3) That the Corporate Director of Economic Development circulate to the Panel an informative on the Community Infrastructure Levy, in advance of the Panel's scrutiny of the policy.

4) That future reports on the St. Cuthbert's Garden Village project be submitted following a key project milestone or activity.

5) That Officers be thanked for their work on the project thus far.