

Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.2

Meeting Date: 4th June 2020
Portfolio: Economy, Enterprise and Housing
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes
Public / Private: Public

Title: Housing Delivery in St Cuthbert's Garden Community
Report of: Corporate Director of Economic Development
Report Number: ED 15/20

Purpose / Summary:

To engage the panel in options for delivering innovation in the housing type, tenure and mix; how land ownership can impact plans for housing development; how a mix of developers and registered providers could be engaged to deliver the housing mix.

Recommendations:

To note the opportunities to make progress on these aspects of the project.

Tracking

Executive:	
Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** St Cuthbert's Garden Village (SCGV) is anchored in the adopted Carlisle District Local Plan 2015 – 2030, which identifies land to the south of the City for growth for a major mixed-use development focussed on housing. The project was accepted into the Government's Garden Villages, Towns and Cities Programme in January 2017.
- 1.2** Key project strands were identified comprised of Masterplanning; Plan Making; Carlisle Southern Link Road; and Delivery. The Governance arrangements include a now well-established cross-party Members' Advisory Group which also includes a representative from each parish council within the area. A review of these arrangements as the project progresses has led to the creation of a multi-disciplinary Vision and Quality Project Group and a Plan Making Group to coordinate Local Plan development with the masterplanning outputs. A multi-agency public sector led Strategic Partnering Board demonstrates a significant strength in joint working and engagement.
- 1.3** The project continues to make good progress with Stage 2 of the masterplanning well underway including robust and ongoing public and stakeholder engagement. A preferred option has been drafted with the intention to consult in summer 2020. Progress has been aided by a series of successful capacity funding bids with the latest award of £320 000 aimed at facilitating key work streams this year.
- 1.4** The project is increasingly complex as interdependences between the individual project strands come to the fore. Report ED 06/19, taken to the Executive in February 2019, sets out the key stages of work for masterplanning, local planning and delivery. A similar report will be considered by the Executive at their 6th April meeting, at which they will be asked to approve workstreams and the indicative spending profile for the year ahead.
- 1.5** This paper is, in response to a direct ask by the Panel, focussed on housing mix and how more innovative approaches to housing delivery could feature as part of the wider delivery response to St Cuthbert's.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1** Delivering innovation in housing type, tenure and mix

- 2.2** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advocates that in order to deliver genuinely affordable homes for all there must be a robust analysis of need. To this end an update to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was commissioned and the final report received in July 2019. This piece of evidence, which the Panel has previously considered separately, looks at demographic trends and housing need projections, affordable housing need, family households and housing mix, older people, people with disabilities and the private rented sector.
- 2.3** Due to the proposed scale of St Cuthbert's it is a given that there will be a wide mix of dwellings and the opportunity will attract a wide variety of players. Therefore the SHMA seeks to set out an understanding of the appropriate mix of housing. However, to reflect that the life of this project could well extend to 2050, the report also provides key analysis looking forward and attempts to capture future changes in the housing market.
- 2.4** The identified mix will inform strategic policies in the St Cuthbert's Local Plan although a flexible approach will need to be adopted, in particular on individual development sites where regard should be had to the nature of the site and the character of the area. However, the scale of the potential development in St Cuthbert's provides the opportunity to deliver a wide range of different housing products for different groups of the population.
- 2.5** The challenge is to address the public perception that new development is designed without any consideration of the character or vernacular of the locality, often with standard house types and street layouts leading to a homogenous layout dominated by the private car. These negative perceptions can lead to public resistance to new housing developments, and is something that has been raised frequently during public consultation on the garden village.
- 2.5** St Cuthbert's therefore offers a unique opportunity to provide a diverse range of housing types and tenures, built by a diverse range of providers. There are a number of different delivery models including development corporation, self and custom build, registered provider, community led initiatives and local authority led partnerships. The following paragraphs and accompanying presentation set out a number of examples of ways in which innovation in housing type, tenure and mix can be achieved, together with any implications of land ownership.
- 2.6 Self/Custom Build and modern methods of construction** : self and custom build can provide variation in design and it is important that they are part of the housing mix at St Cuthbert's. Land should be set aside for this purpose, potentially as

serviced plots. In recognition of the role that self and custom build can play, the Right to Build Task Force was commissioned last year to provide a range of advice on good practice around policy development, identifying opportunities to support custom and self-build housing, and a briefing session was held with officers.

- 2.7** The Task Force is now undertaking further work to help the City Council increase its understanding of local demand for self and custom build, in order to demonstrate supporting evidence for policies pursued by the Council and to inform thinking in relation to future pilot projects.
- 2.8** Officers have been on a fact-finding site visit to the Gateshead Innovation Village where Home Group is looking at new ways of how we can construct homes quicker, use technology smarter and create more energy efficient housing. This is a live research project to build housing from scratch using a mix of traditional and modular homes whilst testing their ongoing performance. It also provides an opportunity for skills training with modular housing increasingly being pursued by some Registered Providers in direct response to ongoing skills shortages in traditional on-site roles such as bricklayers.
- 2.8** **Affordable housing and developer mix:** given the levels of affordable housing need across the whole district, it is considered that opportunities to provide affordable within St Cuthbert's should be maximised (subject to viability). Such housing should be available to buy and rent, as well as an element of housing specifically for older people. The SHMA considers that the Council could consider including a reasonable proportion of bungalows and about 10% of homes as specialist accommodation, in both the market and affordable sectors.
- 2.9** Engagement with Registered Providers has taken place since the inception of the project. Specifically, briefing sessions have been held at The Halston and at Carlisle Racecourse where a range of developers and agents, including registered providers, came together to hear an overview of work to date, pose questions and network with each other. In addition, regular meetings are held between the City Council and registered providers where discussions have centred around the aging population and changing profile of tenants, whose future needs may not be met by their current accommodation, and the opportunities that St Cuthbert's may present to address this.
- 2.10** **Design Guide:** housing type and mix can be influenced and directed by the production of a design guide. Principle 2 of the 9 guiding principles is 'Locally Distinctive' and is aimed at supporting locally distinctive design of buildings, streets

and spaces to create memorable and unique places to live. Stage 2 of the masterplanning includes a requirement to deliver strategic design guidance that will provide clarity about the character of St Cuthbert's and the distinctiveness of the planned villages as well as other important strategic spaces and infrastructure components. In addition there will be consideration of the potential for contemporary design.

- 2.11** This higher-level design guide will then be translated into a Supplementary Planning Document to guide early development in St Cuthbert's. Whilst feedback from consultation has resulted in many comments that people don't want to see houses built by volume housebuilders being part of St Cuthbert's, in reality these developers still have a role to play. However, the design requirements of the planning framework for St Cuthbert's will ensure a more locally responsive output that aligns with our vision for the area.
- 2.12** **Land ownership:** a complex pattern of land ownership extends across the St Cuthbert's area and officers have sought to establish, using data from the Land Registry, a comprehensive map base identifying all known land parcels. Early and continuing engagement with key landowners and their agents has provided an opportunity to verify and amend this map to keep it as up to date as possible. The draft masterplan reflects the availability of land from key landowners, whilst reflecting all known constraints such as flooding, topography, the need to protect key views etc.
- 2.13** It is important that land values are realistic so that the high ambitions embodied in the 9 guiding principles can be met. Public ownership of land can provide an opportunity for innovation in design and delivery of housing. Community land ownership similarly can provide an opportunity to deliver housing in a different way, as in the example of the Lancaster Co-Housing low carbon scheme at Forgebank.
- 2.14** Co-Housing is a Scandinavian model which results in a planned neighbourhood with some shared facilities. The Lancaster scheme factored in the carbon footprint of the building materials, the use of local labour, transport of materials, design of short terraces which are good for retaining heat, and a district heating scheme powered by wood chip amongst a range of other innovative and low carbon initiatives. The resulting scheme has workspace on site, a reduction in heating bills by approximately 84% and community facilities to support the development.
- 2.15** Capital and Centric specialise, amongst other things, in building affordable energy efficient houses that are also faster to construct and cheaper to heat when finished.

Their design emphasis focusses on creating a community as well as space on the street for local facilities. Feedback from consultation on the emerging plans for St Cuthbert's has consistently raised the issue that local people want to see something different to what is currently on offer in and around Carlisle from the existing volume house-builders active in the area.

- 2.16** Housing design hasn't really changed for decades, and feedback has highlighted that there is a perceived blandness and mediocrity in what is on offer. Standard layouts rarely vary whilst the full potential of sites is often not realised. Capital and Centric schemes specialise in space efficient layouts that create high-density living with a community feel but without high-rise living. This has a positive impact on viability, and creates a community where people have the opportunity to interact with each other.

3. RISKS

- 3.1** The main risk to delivery is the reliance that is placed on a willing landowner selling to a developer. Whilst we are aware that a wide range of more innovative players are interested there will be risk to innovative delivery if the public sector doesn't own land or take more of an active stake. Therefore our emerging delivery strategy will need to consider this aspect.
- 3.2** A dedicated risk register is kept and regularly reviewed as part of the overall project management approach. The main risk continues to be centred on the availability of adequate resourcing (in terms of both staff time and budgetary provision) for undertaking the technical work and further engagement needed to maintain momentum and progress of each of the key project strands. Key to managing this will be the continued availability of Government capacity funding, the latest award being announced in January 2020 for the 2019/2020 financial year, but with the inevitable lag between the announcement and receipt of funds.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1** Progress to date has been underpinned by robust, extensive and innovative engagement with this having added clear value to the vision and concept proposals, and options plans for the Garden Village. This has included community engagement, dialogue with key stakeholders including infrastructure providers, dialogue and facilitated sessions with the local Parish Councils and with Members including via the

dedicated Members' Advisory Group. In addition there is an ongoing dialogue with all the key landowners within the area.

4.2 The most recent consultation in Autumn of last year on the options plans for St Cuthbert's saw a wide range of community drop in events in a variety of locations throughout the area together with more focussed stakeholder and landowner workshops. The feedback report from this stage has been published and is available on our web site.

4.3 Community and stakeholder feedback together with ongoing development of evidence, such as viability work, together with the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment will all help to shape the preferred option for St Cuthbert's, which will form the next step in the masterplanning process.

5. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Good progress continues to be made on the specific aspects outlined in this report in relation to St Cuthbert's. With Stage 2 Masterplanning well underway, together with viability work, landowner engagement and Local Plan development, 2020 will be a critical time for putting a framework in place which will not only guide future planning applications, but which will set down a marker for the standards that we expect with this development. Given the nature and profile of the SCGV project, it is important that Members continue to keep abreast and are comfortable with specific elements of the project as well as the overall direction.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

6.1 St Cuthbert's Garden Village will have a significant influence in terms of shaping how Carlisle will grow and function long into the future. Accordingly, it will have a significant, direct and positive impact on a number of Carlisle Plan priorities including:

- *"supporting the growth of more high quality and sustainable business and employment opportunities"* – through identifying new sites for development and opportunities to better balance the local economy;
- *"addressing Carlisle's current and future housing needs"* – through being the single largest development site and therefore contributor to supply across the latter stages of the current Local Plan period and much of the next one, including affordable and specialist housing;

- *“working more effectively with partners to achieve the City Council’s priorities”* – through recognition that the scale of the project requires the input, commitment and direct support of a wide array of stakeholders and partner agencies.

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Appendices
attached to report:

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **ED 28/19 Report to EGSP on St Cuthbert’s Progress Update**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL – ultimately any resultant Development Plan Documents will need to be approved in accordance with Article 4 of the Constitution and the Budget and Policy Framework. Consultants and persons/companies delivering work packages will need to be procured in accordance with the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules and contracts properly documented as appropriate.

PROPERTY SERVICES – If the Council decide to become more active and acquire land, valuation advice will be required to ensure all transactions are at market value and on suitable terms.

FINANCE – The Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan and budgeting for 2019/20 has identified that the Garden Village project is a key priority for the City with Council funding being allocated to supplement the Capacity Funding bids awaited. Further commitments have also been included in the proposed 2019/20 budget for future allocations towards the Carlisle Southern Link Road.

EQUALITY – The SHMA will look at equality issues and housing need projections. In particular, older people and people with disabilities.

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE – There are no Information Governance implications with this report.



St Cuthbert's

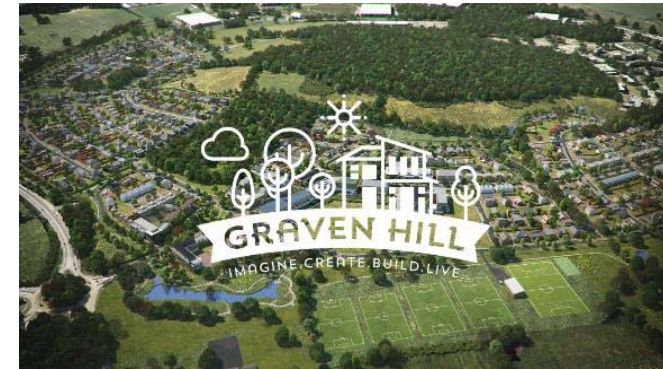
**Delivering innovation in
housing type, tenure and mix**

EGSP 4th June 2020



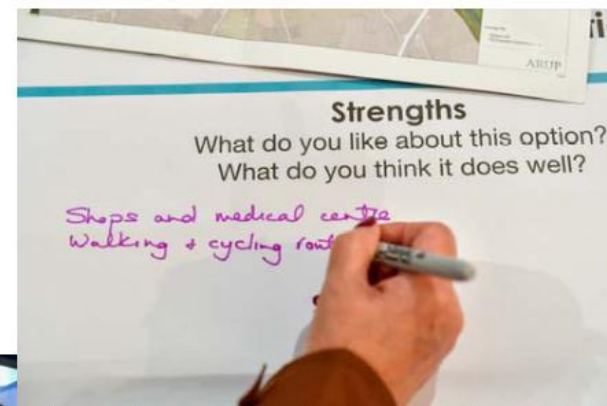
Collaborative Working

- Where others have gone before
- Best practice from around the country
- **Encourage challenge!**
- Networking
- Learn from others – the good, the bad and the ugly!



Engagement

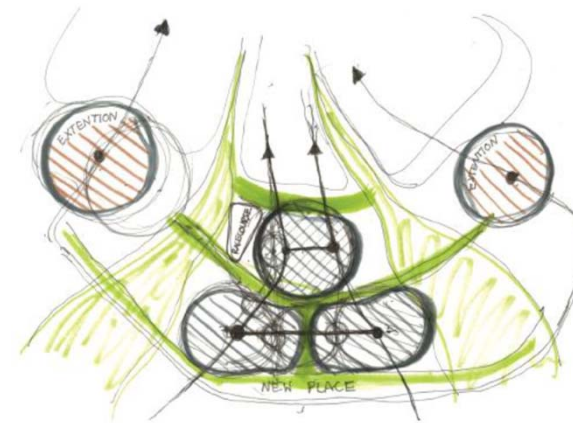
WHERE DO YOU
THINK THE GARDEN
VILLAGE SHOULD
GO?





Design Review

- Bespoke Panel – membership tailored to key drivers
- Independently chaired
- More collaborative approach – tasked with highlighting opportunities / solutions
- Early enough to make a difference!



Each overall strategy could be built up of the three components below. It could be almost as simple as the explanatory diagram, but relating more closely to the existing road layout/urban form.



Key green infrastructure



Public transport routes



Neighbourhood unit*



Approach to Design

- Masterplan will show a range of alternative residential character areas;
- Each area will deliver variations in density, built form and landscape treatment;
- References to local vernacular and materials, but not stifling innovation;
- Let's not forget high quality design principles for employment and community hub areas.

Forgebank Community Housing





Gateshead Innovation Village





Graven Hill





Self and Custom Build

- Element 1
 - effective policy to deliver quantity, form, type and mix of custom and self build housing
- Element 2
 - identifying and maximising opportunities . How to enable and grow this sector
- Element 3
 - what has worked well elsewhere and the role the local LPA played in facilitating this