

GREAT AYCLIFFE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



Notes of a meeting of the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan Housing Thematic Group, held on Thursday 21 May 2015.

Present: Cllr A M Chandran
 Mr C R Peacock
 Mr J Snowball
 Mrs S Cook
 Mr K Robson
 Mrs E French
 Mr S Howarth

Officers: Miss A Corner – Neighbourhood Plan Engagement Officer
 Miss A Donald – Town Clerk's PA

Item No	Discussion	Action
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence Cllr W P Hillary, Mrs C Walton, Mr M Dixon</p>	
2.	<p>Neighbourhood Plan Presentation Angela Corner introduced herself, welcomed all present and outlined the proceedings for the evening. This was followed by a brief presentation indicating the legal requirements of Neighbourhood Plans, evidence gathered from the first round of public consultation, the role of the Housing Thematic Group and objectives to be dealt with in the coming weeks. It was envisaged that the group would be meeting on a fortnightly basis.</p> <p>Members of the Thematic Group were reminded that Neighbourhood Plans were a statutory planning document, required to be community-led, with clear evidence to back up every item in the Plan. It was also emphasised that a Neighbourhood Plan is not a delivery mechanism and that it must be deliverable and sustainable and comply with the National Planning Policy Framework.</p> <p>It was emphasised that although there was current uncertainty regarding the future of Durham County Council's Local Plan it was anticipated that this would not have a major impact on the Neighbourhood Plan, and work could proceed regardless of the status of the Local Plan. Areas identified for development in the Local Plan for Great Aycliffe had not been criticised by the Planning Inspector and it was noted that planning permission was already in place for a number of these areas. The areas being questioned by the inspector were predominantly around Durham City, in particular building on the green belt land, two proposed relief roads and the Drum</p>	



	<p>Industrial Estate additional land allocation.</p> <p>The role of the Housing Thematic Group was to consider a number of housing-related issues identified from responses to the questionnaire and to prepare a series of preferred options, prior to further consultation with residents.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Housing Need</p> <p>Members were asked to consider housing requirements for the future of Aycliffe. A number of statistics were provided regarding current demand for different types of housing. After considerable discussion, the following points were agreed:</p> <p>As Aycliffe has an aging population, there was a requirement for more, two-bedroom, bungalows in suitable, community settings, close to amenities. These should be available as social housing and also as affordable, private housing. It was noted that current guidelines required 10% of new housing over 15 units to meet the lifetime homes standard.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that a mixture of garden sizes would be preferable and that access to a community garden would be beneficial, particularly in the case of sheltered accommodation.</p> <p>It was noted that national guidelines were provided for housing density. It was emphasised that the design of future housing development would be governed by viability for the developer.</p> <p>There was also a requirement for affordable housing for local residents to avoid movement out of the community.</p> <p>A requirement for flats for people in the 55+ age group, integrated in the community would be a consideration preferably with two bedrooms.</p> <p>It was considered most important that the design of new development should preserve the open character of Aycliffe, with access to green spaces – although it was acknowledged that there was a careful balance to be reached between keeping green spaces and preserving the economic viability of the site. It was noted that technical support had been sought to assist with providing a character assessment for the town, which would</p>	

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	<p>influence design policies for future development. The outcome of the application is not yet known.</p> <p>Adequate parking and garage provision would be necessary in future development but questionnaire responses had highlighted the fact that a lack of parking was a current problem, particularly in the older parts of the town, where narrower roads and fewer houses with garages were a feature,.</p> <p>Housing need would be revisited at the next meeting whereby Steve Barker (planning expert) would be in attendance.</p>	
4.	<p>Date of Next Meeting The next meeting would be held on Thursday 4 June 2015 at the Council Offices.</p>	All to Note