

GREAT AYCLIFFE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



Notes of a meeting of the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, held on Thursday 16 July 2015.

Present: Cllr B Hall – Great Aycliffe Town Council
 Cllr J Atkinson - Great Aycliffe Town Council
 Cllr M Dalton – Great Aycliffe Town Council
 Cllr I Gray – Great Aycliffe Town Council
 Cllr M Dixon – Durham County Council
 Mr D Sutton-Lloyd – Community Representative
 Mr S Howarth – Voluntary Sector
 Mr I Wiggett – Public Representative

Officers: Miss A Corner – Neighbourhood Plan Engagement Officer
 Mrs C Walton – Corporate and Policy Officer
 Miss A Donald – Town Clerk’s PA

Item No	Discussion	Action
1.	<p>Apologies for Absence Mr J Cokill, Cllr C Wheeler, Mr M Rowcroft, Mr B Riley, Mrs K Clark. It was noted that Mr B Haldane had resigned from the Steering Group.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
3.	<p>Notes of Previous Meeting The notes of the meeting, held on Thursday 18 June 2015, were confirmed as a correct record.</p>	
4.	<p>Soft Market Testing Simon Elliott from Sanderson Weatherall presented the results of the Soft Market Testing exercise the company had undertaken on behalf of the Steering Group. There had been a very poor response rate to the questionnaires sent out to retailers, despite a number of follow-up exercises. The initial contact list consisted of approximately 150 large and small retailers. However, only 139 businesses were contacted with only 12 responses. It was noted that in the small number of respondents, there was very little interest in locating a retail business in Great Aycliffe, either in the Town Centre or on another site. Reasons given were the location of existing stores in neighbouring towns and established shopping areas, and the general demographics and footfall linked to this.</p> <p>There was a limited amount of interest, which would be worth following up. It was emphasised that future retail trends would be very difficult to predict. Retailers would</p>	



	<p>not be interested in a stand-alone unit outside of the town centre but would in all likelihood require a group or terrace of perhaps 3-4 shop units.</p> <p>It was agreed that this exercise had re-affirmed existing evidence provided by Durham County Council.</p> <p>Although enhanced retail provision had been highlighted as a main priority for many residents, since retailers were not interested in locating their businesses in Aycliffe, a site for potential development could not be designated as there would be no evidence to support this as a requirement.</p> <p>There was a very lengthy debate around the table, with a number of various views being expressed and the SG members were disappointed with the findings. However, the group agreed that the evidence clearly did not support any policies or land allocations being made within the NP.</p> <p>Some members of the Steering Group felt that with the prospective new housing developments planned for Aycliffe, future need should be considered and it was agreed that a suitable clause to reflect this should be incorporated into the Plan. A draft of some wording for retail be circulated for consideration and agreed at the next meeting.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Neighbourhood Plan – General Progress</p> <p>A meeting would be held with DCC planners and further consideration would be given to the concept of a retirement village, further details to be reported in due course.</p> <p>Angela Corner would be leaving the Council on 4 August to take up a new post. She thanked the Steering Group members for their help and support and wished the group well for the future. In turn, Angela was thanked for her hard work and received best wishes for a successful future.</p> <p>Christine Walton would be taking over as the lead officer for the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting would be held on Thursday 20 August.</p>	<p>All to Note</p>