

Mon 9th July 2018 - Meeting Notes

Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group – Extraordinary Meeting convened to respond to:

The Draft Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Housing Needs Assessment prepared by AECOM (HNA) and

The TWBC Draft High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 - 2024

Attendees:

Sarah Lewis (SL) – TWBC Housing Needs Register & Development Manager (affordable housing)

Cllr Nancy Warne (NW)– in the chair

Liz Daley (LD)

Cllr David Cook (DC)

Matthew Warne (MW)

Mark Wade (MkW)

Marion Cranmer (MC)

Nem Goodman (NG)

Lee Hatcher (LH)

June Bell (JB)– Recording notes from meeting

Jeremy Boxall (JBo) – in part

Steve Gasson (SG) – in part

Declared interest: Mark Wade - Chairman of Crane Valley Land Trust (CVLT)

Agenda

NW- announced that meeting would be limited to 1 item only due to time constraint and size of document: AECOM Draft Housing Needs Assessment

NW – Introduction to Sarah Lewis TWBC Housing Needs Register & Development Manager

Attendees introduced themselves & their roles within the NDP

Sarah requested clarification of who AECOM are & where they fit in with the Neighbourhood Plan?

NW – explained the AECOM remit to provide objectively assessed housing data to underpin developing policies within the Neighbourhood Plan (NP)

LD - What is SL's definition of affordable?

MkW - Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Draft Housing & Design policy has the definition: *'affordable' housing is defined as affordable by workers in the parish on a median household income to either rent, self-finish or purchase. It does not mean 'social housing' provided for by government agencies or non-profit organisations, such as housing associations, to people on low wage/no income or with needs that qualify for special support.*

SL - NPPF defines affordable housing as "Social rented, *affordable* rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market" (NPPF 2012). These could include those owned & managed by a Housing Association (HA) and other Registered Providers, and those owned & managed by Homes England.

HA stock is let at social rented. HAs also offering affordable rents – 80% of market rent

Intermediate housing – shared ownership – part bought.

Affordable rent is set by local housing allowance and it can't go above this.

Intermediate rent can be 80% of market value.

HA owns property in perpetuity. Freehold owner is the HA. HA stock may be bought unless it is within a rural development – and planning permission was given as a rural exception site.

NW - referred to AECOM HNA pg 21 Para 5.1

89. Social, Affordable rented & intermediate market housing as SL described

91. Revised definition of affordable housing within NPPF 18

a) **Affordable housing for rent** – meets all following conditions; **a)** rent set in accordance with Gov. rent policy or 20% below local market rents, **b)** landlord is a Registered Provider, **c)** remains affordable for future eligible households

b) **Starter Homes** – income restrictions

c) **Discounted Market** – sold with at least 20% discount below local market value – stays as this for other eligible buyers.

d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership** includes homes for sale providing a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market; shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale & rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent)

NW - referred to AECOM HNA pg 57. Table 10.2

C&S had a higher proportion of social rented housing, av weekly income £880/w – 30% of income for rent.

SL - commented that pg 6 Headline 2 is confusing statement 'to support built to rent (BTR)'.

SL – **advised BTR needs to be better defined by AECOM. NW to follow up.**

MW – clarified some fractions can afford to buy but stock not available in their budget.

Affordable to buy are needed as evidence local surveys.

NW – AECOM report concludes C&S affordable housing needs will be met by Core Policy 6 - only need 35% affordable – **this doesn't match our NP aspirations**

SL - Borough wide survey suggests a need 421units per year

MkW – We do need to be clear of these definitions. NP currently aspires to address intermediate housing (aspirant worker/key workers) Range of ownership models for rent & purchase.

Currently discussing possibility collaboration with CVLT and developers aiming for sustainable affordable developments – Up to 60% discount – alternative affordable options

NW – referred to AECOM HNA pg 28 para 5.4

113: 'may need to monitor TWBC list'.

The group considered it doesn't take into account that the stock in the pipeline is of higher cost and 2/3rds will be out of reach of local people. Real local need of affordable stock mandates a rebalance in favour of the affordable

AECOM headline 2 is not in line of our NP policy aspiration for 50% in order to balance the stock available at affordable options

Conclusion – stay at 50% in NP to meet local need for affordable housing

1. Meet 50% by offering the a,b c, d as defined in NPPF 18
2. Draw down government funding to enable community led housing and other schemes – ambitions of discounts of up to 60% of market value
3. MkW – informed group of engagement with Sally Marsh Director of High Weald AONB. If NP is in alignment with High Weald AONB Management Plan then

consideration for development on greenfield AONB sites within the parish would be supported by AONB Joint Advisory Committee if provision for affordable housing is 100% or very close to this target.

SL – informed group that Home England – 4yr tranche of funding for community led housing Community led projects would look to keep these stocks in perpetuity through lease hold or contracts - can sell on but not for profit. Buy house but not investment.

MkW - optimistic to work with HAs such as HASTOE housing association – full sustainability -high eco standards compliant with NP policies

NW - requested that the NPPF 18 definitions for affordable options need to be written into NP Housing and Design policy

SL - feels there would be support for these schemes.

JBo – considered AECOM HNA declared an inaccurate weekly wage - skewed demographics of survey response. Survey did not take into account age of home ownership, house bought when younger etc

MW – suggested need to investigate salary for local home seekers

NW – reinforced need for 1-2 bed houses for downsizers, affordable for workers & to attract the younger families back to the parish.

This would not just contribute to local community but saving infrastructure

NW – referred to AECOM HNA pg 38 Section 7 Specialist Housing for Older People

NW – commented that single occupancy older people in parish and is doubtful specialist housing meets needs.

Expensive, no communal areas.

Group agreed need for mixed housing – older people supported by younger & vice versa

SL – advised to write this into policy

MW – suggested ‘generation blind’ as well as ‘tenure blind’ for all developments within parish.

NW – referred to AECOM HNA pg 42 Figure 7-3: Dementia Care Chart – supported by group – **be explicit about intent for the developments to meet mixed generation needs.**

MW – raised single level option of ‘Bungalows’ for discussion

MkW - Good design will meet needs single level dwelling but could offer 2 storey option – Upside down house – public exhibition June 18 comment – supported by the group.

MW - suggested Maisonette living area downstairs & upstairs for family bedroom & sitting area.

JBo – asked group to consider ‘Lifetime Home standards’ allow for homes built to meet needs/adaptations ready for later life needs.

JB – asked the group if there were any objections to recording the remainder of proceedings. No objections raised. The following is a transcription of the main points arising up to meeting close

NW - referred to AECOM HNA pg 43 para 7.7 Planning Flexibility

Incorporating bigger community spaces similar to the practice of ‘alleygating’ (alley ways from backs of terraced houses gated off) with additional shared indoor spaces.

Size and availability of shared indoor & outdoor areas need defined within NP policy

Requires a viable management plan for the new development & encourages community spirit and ownership with direction of a Management company.

MW – asked for other matters arising for AECOM HNA which SL may offer advice

NW – asked for clarification of the Headline 5 pg 6 Specialist provision for Gypsy & Traveller community in the parish. What evidence is there to support this need?

SL – clarified the Housing register does not ask this specific question & SL not involved in Gypsy & Traveller needs assessment across the borough.

SL has historically only been aware of Gypsies/travellers in parish if they are homeless

Suggest Deborah Dixon may have information on the number of gypsy/traveller families, requiring pitches within the parish/ whether there is a register.

NW- to clarify with Deborah Dixon , TWBC Senior Planning Officer parish obligations for Gypsy / Traveller needs within parish

LH – asked for clarification of definition of ‘Concealed families’ AECOM HNA pg 53 para 9.6

MW – suggested it presupposes non-related persons or non-dependent children /most likely in this parish

Travellers families may have the same prevailing issue

SL – Advised further interrogation of the need. SL – referred to AECOM HNA pg 44 para 8; 196 source of evidence

AECOM report assuming a proportional share of the borough provision and not evidenced need in the parish itself?

JBo – Definition of ‘pitch’ – space required to accommodate 1 household and their caravan(s) and space to turn vehicles.

NW to determine definition of ‘pitch’ and ‘household’ and clarify local needs through discussion with Deborah Dixon.

Conclusion of group – Comment on Headlines:

Headline 1. 610 net 38/yr dwellings* may not meet TWBC HNA using new standard methodology (MHCLG) indicating 646 dwellings by end of plan 2017 -2033 i.e.

40/yr

***LH asked for clarification if BKF is included in this figure.**

SL advised that the Borough wide Housing Needs Survey (broken down by parish) and include needs for affordable stock is imminent for publication

Headline 2. Build to Rent Stock – Strategic Housing Market Assessment - Is this the answer to meet local needs for C&S Parish?

We agree with recommendation if referring to social rent but not if it refers to market rent.

Please define the term ‘Build to Rent’ as used within the AECOM HNA. Question terminology ‘Build to Rent’.

SL – advised need a selection of tenures

Headline 3. Correct CPC to CSPC.

Report is predicated on conventional model of delivering homes through large development.

Supported by community response majority voted for dispersed farmstead model.

Group agree with need but not with solution.

Group unanimous it has to be high density.

Evidence is in AECOM HNA - historically too many new build 5 bed dwellings in parish.

Headline 4. Group agree with number (44 over plan period) but not concept of specialist homes.

NP favours integrated communities – age blind/tenure blind.

Homes for life would negate the need for stock of specialist homes / market housing & social housing provision – needs written into NP policy.

Single storey not just for the elderly but all ages with accessibility issues*.

Headline 5. NW to investigate with DD & SB, challenge evidence behind headline in context of the parish.

What is TWBC assessment for Gypsy /Traveller needs in the Borough & Parish?

*SL – suggested locally adopted standards that will transcend the current standards of building regulations

Currently Part M4 (2) of building regs is equivalent to a Lifetime Home

Part M4 (3) is higher than this standard.

To improve building standards for all new developments specify in NP that M4 (2) & (3) to be the acceptable standard within the parish

NW to seek further advice on building regs from Steve Baughen

LD – requested advice from SL on discussions with Persimmon, developer at Brick Kiln Farm. The motion to increase density would not be considered due to need to a new planning application incurring additional delay.

SL – Proposed if a HA has not been engaged by Persimmon or agreed a mix of tenure then request that CVLT could deliver the affordable element.

Reinforce the opportunity to meet community needs & achieve a good design within an AONB and an exemplary development for future housebuilding in terms of low energy meeting the highest standards of sustainability and affordability.

MkW – May be possible for CVLT to apply for community land funding and but the land from Persimmon and explore a possible partnership with Hastoe?

In addition there is a sum of £250k due back to the C&S community from a previous S106 obligation towards affordable housing.

Conditions for use of this fund are for the provision of affordable housing.

SL – Suggest model it as a CLT model then eligible for funding through community land purchase. MkW – Berkeleys (developer at Turnden) may be more interested in this scheme.

NW – to explore this option during next meeting with Berkeley.

NW – Thanked all for attending and SL for all advice offered. Meeting closed at 9pm