

Development Plan Steering Group – 9 September 2008 @ 9:30am

Councillors Present: Reid (Chair), Blencowe, Holness, Baker, Ward

Also Present: David Roberts (Head of Policy & Projects)

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 8 July were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Herbert and Newbold

3. Declaration of Interest

None were made

4. Public Questions

None

5. Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) – Annex 2, Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

DR – Members agreed that once the SMHA was published, key findings will be included in the annex of the SPD. The Annex will be updated regularly, as needed, and will be monitored to ensure it is working.

The SMHA shows a large amount of need for family housing. County forecasts predict an increase in 0-15 year olds and 15-19 year olds if building takes place at the predicted rate in the area. There will also be a large increase in the number of working age adults and single people.

South Cambridgeshire will have significant (but lower than Cambridge), growth in these populations.

The proposed mix will vary from site to site. Smaller sites give less opportunity for varied housing.

A discussion on under and over occupancy ensued and the issue of over occupancy in social housing and the mismatch on the expectations of those in Market housing would be expected. Cllr Reid explained that the City Council has a policy of under occupancy in affordable housing in new developments and DR pointed out that paragraph 48 in the affordable housing policy states that initial

stock must not be occupied at 100% to allow for growth. This is a long standing policy.

Cllr Holness asked how the targets in the document are measured and DR explained that this is on a site by site basis, reiterating his previous comments on the size of the sites giving more or less opportunity to gain a mix of housing. Cllr Holness was concerned that 'windfall' sites and densification can lead to too many small houses. Cllr Reid said that the location and position of a site would affect the size of the dwellings needed.

DR reported that policy on housing in the Local Plan doesn't quote percentages. The SPD is material consideration when negotiations are taking place and are taken into account in the planning process and when giving planning advice. Planning Committee give final approval to applications and targets are reported on in the Annual Monitoring Report which should be used by Members in decision making.

Cllr Reid remarked that the policies are backed up by a strong evidence base and Cllr Ward thought that developers would welcome free evidence of housing need in the area.

It was agreed that the document should be clear and unambiguous in stating that the mix applies to both the affordable market housing. Unless the Annex is urgently needed (in terms of expected proposals) it should go to the November Environment Scrutiny Committee.