

Notes of a meeting to discuss the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plan for Crosthwaite and Lyth, held at the Murley Moss offices of LDNPA on 16 December 2019

Present: Paula Allen (LDNPA), Louise Kirkup (Kirkwells, consultant to Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group), and Steering Group members Robert Sykes, Dorothy Grace and Graham Paine

BACKGROUND

The meeting had been set up to discuss the preparation of a NDP for Crosthwaite and Lyth, and Louise (LK) of Kirkwells had prepared a draft 'Issues and Options' Document (IOD) in advance of the meeting for discussion at the meeting.

The Steering Group had agreed in advance that the particular areas of LK's IOD for discussion with Paula were local housing and the natural environment. Community facilities and infrastructure were considered to be of lower importance for this meeting, as there was less divergence of view in this area.

There was a general, helpful discussion about how to go about preparing the NDP, and in particular the following matters were discussed. Overall there is a need for the document to be more specific about what the local issues are, including non planning ones such as drainage and surface water flooding. References to the old local plans should be deleted as the LDNPA are close to adopting the new Local Plan.

DISCUSSION

1. In the context of an initial discussion about the large amount of development that had taken place during the last couple of years in and around Crosthwaite, Paula (PA) was asked what sort of targets were likely to be set for building new housing in the Central South East Distinctive Area and in particular in villages as it would be very helpful in preparing our NDP to have an idea of numbers. PA said that the Inspectors have recommended the percentage targets for villages/rural service centres etc to be taken out of the Local Plan and everything would now be driven by "need", so she could not give any meaningful numbers. PA was asked to clarify whose "need" did she have in mind, was it the need of the LDNPA to meet its overall housing targets or the need of the local parish in question? PA confirmed that it referred to the need of the local parish/ Distinctive Area. The SHMA identified a need for 26 dwellings pa across the whole of the central and south east Distinctive Area.
2. In the light of (1) above the NDP will need to be very specific about the housing needs of the parish, and this will need to be evidence-based with a strong rationale. Accordingly, PA confirmed that it would be necessary for there to be a new housing needs survey undertaken as we could not really rely upon the one that was done in 2016, given the timescale of the NDP. PA gave the details of Megan Henderson of Eden District Council who would be able to help in this regard. Subsequently Eden District Council have provided a quote of £3042 to undertake the survey.
3. There was a discussion about local occupancy. PA said that in the revised Supplementary Planning Document that should be adopted in the Spring the local occupancy definition for employment is to be changed to anyone living in Cumbria, thus making it much less restrictive than at present. However, there was still not going to be any means by which a change of use from existing permanent residence to holiday home/second home can be prevented as this does not require planning consent.
4. On the question of affordable housing PA said there was no reason why our NDP could not include a provision, for example, that any development of 3 or more dwellings must include an element of affordable housing. Indeed, the NDP could even go as far as to say that only affordable housing should be allowed, provided that there was robust rationale with sufficient evidence to demonstrate that this is the "need" for the parish eg from an up to date Housing Needs Assessment.

5. PA recommended that the NDP should not attempt to allocate sites for development as this was likely to prove to be too difficult. However, the NDP could identify possible opportunities for brownfield windfall sites, again with a robust and evidenced rationale. The criteria for 'cluster communities' are already set out in the Local Plan so there is no need to identify these locally in the NDP.
6. PA said that in the new Local Plan there would be provision whereby in considering any planning application the planners will specifically take into account any lack of local infrastructure, for example, the lack of mains sewerage, when considering any planning application. However these should be identified as issues where relevant in the NDP.
7. In paragraph 5.1.10 of Kirkwells' IOD it mentions the possibility of identifying a settlement boundary/ village envelope for Crosthwaite. PA said that this concept was no longer identified in the Local Plan. . When asked if this implied that development creep between different settlements, leading to the joining of settlements, would now be viewed by the planners as acceptable, PA said categorically that this would not be the case.
8. There was a general discussion about environmental and biodiversity issues. PA said that for any new development the developer would have to show that the development in question would create an increase in biodiversity ('net gain'). She suggested that in our NDP we should be specific about the importance of the area covered by the parish to wildlife, biodiversity and the environment in general. We should highlight, and regard as positive, the various environmental designations that exist in the parish. The Issues and Options document should include links to the interactive maps for the Local Plan - as there are so many overlapping designations it would be difficult to show these on a printed map, but they are available as layers on the interactive map.
9. PA suggested that including a design code in the NDP would be helpful.
10. PA advised that, given there are to be quite a lot of changes in the Local Plan, we should not start drafting the detail of the NDP until that plan has been adopted in the Spring.