

Report

Report subject : Draft Development Brief: Land Between Netheravon Road and High Street Durrington
Report to : Northern Area Committee
Date : 15 June 2006
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1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Policy H12 of the Adopted Local Plan (June 2003) allocates land for residential development in Durrington. This site was allocated to meet the district's overall housing requirement for the period up until 2011. The Local Plan indicates that in order to guide and control development of the site, a development brief must be prepared.
- 1.2 Following a lengthy preparation process, a draft development brief was released for consultation for a period of 6 weeks from 16/2/2006 to 31/3/2006.
- 1.3 This report now considers the issues raised in the consultation period and highlights the principal changes made to the brief as a result.
- 1.4 Subject to acceptance that all the issues raised have been satisfactorily addressed and that the changes made are appropriate, the report concludes by seeking a recommendation from this Committee to the Cabinet that the revised brief be adopted in full as SPG.
- 1.5 A copy of the revised brief is attached as Appendix 1 for Members' information, and a colour copy has been placed in the Members' room. For members of the public, the revised brief is available to view at The Planning Office reception at Wyndham Road during office hours and on the Council's website at www.salisbury.gov.uk/durrington-development-brief.

2. Background

- 2.1 Policy H12 of the adopted Local Plan allocates land between the High Street and the A345 for residential development. The purpose of a Development Brief is to provide a broad framework for the development of a site in accordance with the requirements of the Local Plan and to take into account more detailed local conditions. In short, the development brief is a bridge between the Local Plan policy and future planning applications.
- 2.2 A key part of the development brief preparation process is that appropriate public consultation must be undertaken to inform those with interests and gain views, which can be taken into account in shaping the final brief. The ultimate goal is to identify a development solution that optimises the benefits of the development and minimises any negative impacts.
- 2.3 These Development Brief proposals have been subjected to consultation, and the views from that consultation exercise have been assimilated back into the brief wherever it is reasonable and appropriate to do so, and it is recommended that the document be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).
- 2.4 Whilst having no statutory status in its own right, SPG represents a significant material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 2.5 Work on the Durrington Development Brief began in 2004 with a series of meetings between agents for the developer and officers. In February 2006, draft proposals were released for public consultation. In order to ensure that the proposals were exposed to as much public scrutiny as possible, officers and the developers' agent prepared a range of publicity materials which included the delivery of leaflets to local households, and held two public exhibition days at Durrington village hall. In all over 100 people attended the exhibitions, which enabled them to see and to question the proposals.

3. Results of consultation

- 3.1 A formal period of public consultation was undertaken in respect of the draft Development Brief between 16/2/2006 and 31/3/2006. Every effort was made to ensure that local people were informed of this opportunity. Furthermore, some 20 other consultee organisations including English Nature, the Environment Agency, and the Wilts & Dorset Bus Company were sent a copy of the brief to ensure that operational issues were taken account of.
- 3.2 At the close of the consultation period, 52 responses had been received. Of these 31 were neutral or did not state objection or support, whilst 18 were in overt objection, and 3 were in overt support of the proposals. One of the objections was a petition on behalf of 18 individuals, of whom 11 were new respondents (i.e., not having also submitted objection letters individually).
- 3.3 The input of all consultees to this exercise is welcome and has improved the quality of the brief in a number of areas. A full summary of the issues raised by respondents is set out in the Representations Table at Appendix 2 to this report, along with officer comment. Alterations to the brief are set out in the right-hand column in response to these points, and are incorporated into the revised version now presented to members.
- 3.4 The following section examines the issues that solicited the most interest and concern during the consultation, and which resulted in significant alterations to the Brief.

4. Main issues

Highways and traffic

- 4.1 The majority of resident respondents raised issues around congestion, road safety, and road design, relating to the following main elements.

Junction to A345

- 4.2 In the Appendix to the consultation version of the brief, two options for the type of access from the A345 into the site were proposed.
- 4.3 Of those consultees specifically commenting on the junction type, the overwhelming majority favoured the roundabout option, predominantly on grounds of safety – both in respect of turning into and out of the site, and the resultant general calming effect on the A345 to the south and north as it passes the village.
- 4.4 These points are valid and it is considered that they outweigh the potential disadvantages of the roundabout, i.e. it being a more engineered, ‘urbanising’ option. Therefore in the revised brief the T-junction arrangement has been removed from the Appendix and the text amended to reflect the roundabout option now recommended.

Through access

- 4.5 Many respondents were concerned that the road through the development, by introducing a new link between the A345 and the High Street, would result in a ‘rat-run’ with residents of other parts of the village cutting through the development. The potential for this is acknowledged in paragraph 4.34 of the Local Plan, and therefore was addressed in the draft brief through traffic calming and using a circuitous road layout.
- 4.6 Nevertheless in the light of significant public concern, the revised brief takes the opportunity to enhance this through specifically seeking a 20mph speed limit, and resiting the allotment car parking to the north of the access road to make the through-road more circuitous.

Design

- 4.7 A large proportion of respondents to the consultation raised concerns around housing design, materials, visual references, and the impact upon the Conservation Area. In addition, since the consultation version of the brief was drafted, the design guide “Creating Places” has been adopted as SPG, and commits the Council to upholding the highest standards of urban design and architecture.
- 4.8 In the light of these points, it is clear that the draft brief was not explicit enough in terms of design quality, and that references to local architecture and materials were of insufficient quality and relevance. Consequently the opportunity has been taken to address these issues and significantly improve the quality of development sought in the brief.
- 4.9 In sections 3 and 4 of the revised brief (pages 10-11 and page 14), photographs illustrating the vernacular styles of the Conservation Area in Durrington have been inserted to replace the references to more commonplace, undistinguished examples in the general area that were in the draft version.
- 4.10 The text of the brief has been amended in a number of places to emphasise the quality of the Conservation Area and the need for future development of the site to respect it and uphold high quality standards, most notably at paragraphs 3.7, 5.5, and 5.13. The most important addition is at 5.5 (within DP3) where the following statement has been added:
- The quality outcomes required by this brief, and which are appropriate to the context, can only be achieved by the design of bespoke buildings which draw on the vernacular traditions of the area. Standard, ‘off-the-peg’ housing will not be acceptable.*
- 4.11 Within 5.22 it has been specifically added that the quality of design of affordable housing must be ‘indistinguishable’ from the private houses.

Allotments

- 4.12 Given the existence of allotments on this allocated housing site, and the proposal within the brief to relocate them, concerns were naturally raised by allotment holders, which (aside from objections in principle to the relocation) related principally to the quality of the new allotments and the provision of facilities.

- 4.13 Within the consultation draft of the brief, it was proposed that the allotments be relocated to the south-west corner of the site. Consultee input and the advice of the Arboricultural Officer have, however, highlighted the inadequacy of this site due to the presence of trees immediately to the south and west, which would pose problems for growing produce because of the blockage of light and the take-up of water.
- 4.14 In the revised version of the brief, the allotments have been moved to the area north of the access road between the A345 and the housing site. This site is also preferable since it reduces the proportion of the allotment site that would be in close proximity to the road, and since it defines the allotments from the general amenity open space more clearly and logically.

Land behind Red House

- 4.15 In the draft version of the brief, the site plans indicated a sector of the site behind the Red House (to the north of the access road from the High Street), as being left vacant and retained by the MOD. It is acknowledged that in error these plans (as was pointed out during the consultation) were inconsistent with those in the Appendix, where housing was indicated in this location. The consultants, pending a decision by the MOD on the extent and phasing of its disposal of the site, had drawn up different versions of the plans and inadvertently these versions were mixed in the consultation brief.
- 4.16 However, it is now known that the MOD intends to vacate the entirety of the area behind the Red House, and it is considered appropriate that this extra area be indicated as housing within the revised brief. The area is a brownfield site within the Housing Policy Boundary and outside the Conservation Area, and therefore in any case a strong candidate for further housing. In addition, the Development Principles of the brief, notably around quality of design, would apply and therefore uphold the same standards as the rest of the site. The inclusion of this area would therefore enable the site to be treated as a cohesive whole unit, treated as one development, as opposed to two individual parcels.
- 4.17 Hence the plans in the main part of the brief have been amended to indicate housing on the additional sector.

Provision of facilities

- 4.18 Given the substantial size of the development site, concerns were naturally raised in the consultation over the capacity of the village to accommodate the increased population in terms of health, education, and community facilities, and crime and antisocial behaviour. It should be noted however that the Local Education Authority, Wiltshire Constabulary, and South Wiltshire PCT raised no such concerns at the consultation. Indeed, the Head of Durrington Infant School and the Police Liaison Officer were in support of the proposals, whilst the PCT indicated that there is a healthy ratio of GPs to patients in the area and that no negative impact on access to GP services in the area is anticipated as a result of the new build.
- 4.19 Nevertheless it is recognised that in addition to these key services, community facilities will also experience additional demand from a major housing development. Durrington's emerging Parish Plan, drafted following extensive research and engagement, identifies the improvement of community recreational facilities such as for sports and youth as an aspiration, and every opportunity should be taken for the development of this site to contribute towards realising these aims.
- 4.20 It is acknowledged that the draft brief was insufficiently clear in specifying the contributions that could be available to the local community, and which could act to mitigate concerns over crime and antisocial behaviour. The opportunity has therefore been taken to acknowledge more explicitly the role of Local Plan policies R2 and R4 in contributing towards community sports and leisure facilities within the context of the new Parish Plan.
- 4.21 Paragraph 9.3 outlines the key areas expected to benefit from planning obligations, including affordable housing, primary and secondary education, open space and recreational facilities, recycling facilities and drainage infrastructure.

Affordable housing

- 4.22 The need for affordable housing is established within the adopted SPG and indeed this is reiterated within the Durrington Parish Plan. Hence a proportion of 30% is being sought on this site. Several

consultation respondents however raised concerns, which (aside from objections *per se* to affordable housing) related to their place within the development, and the perception that undesirable 'ghettos' could emerge.

- 4.23 As such, DP6 (paragraph 5.22) has been amended to state that affordable housing can be in groups of no more than 15 units, and must in design terms be indistinguishable in terms of their quality of design from the private houses.

Other amendments

- 4.24 In response to concerns raised from various correspondents on environmental and sustainability issues, the text of paragraph 5.2 has been amended to cite more explicitly the types of features to be expected of development, i.e. compost bins and water butts.
- 4.25 The site plans have been amended to indicate the location of Willow Cottage, to the south of the access road from the High Street (the OS base mapping used in the brief does not include this new dwelling).

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Subject to the agreement of the changes set out in this report and the attached table in the Appendix, members are asked to recommend that the Cabinet at its July meeting formally adopts the brief as SPG. Subject to agreement by the Cabinet, it is likely that a planning application will then be submitted for the development of the site.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 That Members accept the proposed changes as set out in this report and in the Development Brief attached to the report and recommend to the Cabinet that the revised Brief be adopted as SPG.**

Background Papers:

Salisbury District Local Plan (June 2003)

Land Between Netheravon Road And High Street Durrington (consultation draft) February 2006

Both available at www.salisbury.gov.uk/planning via the Forward Planning web page.

- **Implications:**
- **Financial:** None
- **Legal:** As set out in the report
- **Human Rights:** Article 6 (the right to a fair hearing) may apply. The consultation process contributes to compliance with this.
- **Personnel:** None at this stage
- **IT:** None
- **Community Safety:** None at this stage
- **Council's Core Values:** Excellent service, thriving economy, fairness & equality, open council & willing partner, communicating with the public, supporting the disadvantaged, protecting the environment.
- **Parish Affected:** Durrington