

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

CABINET

DATE: 12 JULY 2016

DCLG PROSPECTUS: LOCALLY LED GARDEN VILLAGES (LLGV)

Report of the Chief Executive

Cabinet Member: Councillor Allan Hepple - Economic Growth

Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the Government's publication "Locally Led Garden Villages, Town and Cities" (DCLG, March 2016) and to advise on interest in developing a garden settlement in Northumberland following publication of the prospectus.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1. Notes the content of the report and agrees to the submission of an Expression Of Interest (EOI) to DCLG for support in developing proposals for a new garden village at The Dissington Estate, Ponteland**
- 2. Following further discussion with DCLG as part of the EOI process, approves the making of further modifications to the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy, requiring further public consultation, to allow the garden village proposal to be brought forward through the Plan.**

Link to the Corporate Plan

A proposal involving the creation of a new garden settlement in Northumberland would align with the County Council's objectives of delivering economic growth, new housing provision and creating vibrant and sustainable communities as identified in the Corporate Plan 2013 - 2017

Key Issues

The Government's ambition is to deliver one million new homes across the country by 2020. In order to achieve this, the Government is pursuing a variety of initiatives aimed at accelerating housing supply whilst also improving quality and affordability, and increasing home ownership.

Garden villages are a key component of the Government's housing agenda. A prospectus published in March 2016 by DCLG invites expressions of interest for new and locally-led garden settlement initiatives by 31 July 2016.

Since publication of the DCLG prospectus, the Council has been approached by a landowner and developer, Lugano Developments Limited, who have an interest in developing a garden village in Northumberland and working with the Council to prepare submission of an EOI. The land in question, known as The Dissington Estate, is located north of Ponteland in the Green Belt. The land is not currently proposed for Green Belt deletion in the Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy Pre Submission Draft - Major Modifications (June 2016) and therefore further major modifications to the document, requiring further public consultation, would be necessary to allow the garden village proposal to be brought forward through the Local Plan process.

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Background

1. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published a prospectus in March 2016 inviting expressions of interest for new and locally-led garden settlement initiatives. Alongside its continued support for larger scale garden towns and cities, the prospectus extends the Government's backing to the creation of settlements on a smaller scale referred to as "garden villages".
2. The Government's ambition is to deliver one million new homes across the country by 2020. In order to achieve this, the Government is pursuing a variety of initiatives aimed at accelerating housing supply whilst also improving quality and affordability, and increasing home ownership.
3. Garden villages are a key component of the Government's housing agenda. The prospectus published in March 2016 gives a clear commitment from the Government to strengthen national planning policy to provide a more supportive approach for the creation of new settlements, including changes to the New Towns Act 1981, to ensure a fit-for-purpose vehicle for the delivery of new garden villages.
4. The prospectus invites Local Authorities to submit expressions of interest (EOI) for the creation of new sustainable communities based on garden city principles. Key eligibility criteria set out in the DCLG prospectus are as follows:-
 - Garden village proposals comprising of between 1,500 and 10,000 homes are invited;
 - Garden villages must be new discrete settlements and not an urban extension of an existing town or village;
 - EOIs must demonstrate how a proposed garden village will be well-designed, built to a high quality, and attractive;
 - Schemes should be part of a wider strategy to secure the delivery of new housing to meet assessed need;
 - Proposals with a strong prospect of quantified early delivery, a significant acceleration of housing delivery, and genuinely additional housing supply will be welcomed through the EOI process; and
 - A strong local commitment to delivery including support from private sector developers and/or landowners is essential.
5. EOIs must be submitted by 31 July 2016 through the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The Government thereafter intends to announce up to 12 garden village proposals that it has chosen to support in the Autumn.

6. To support Local Authorities in realising their vision for new garden settlements, the DCLG prospectus advises that the Government will provide a tailored package of support that could include a limited amount of funding towards, for example, the preparation of key studies and assessments and the appointment of specially skilled staff to assist in the delivery of the project. Direct support can also be provided by the HCA, including through their Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS)
7. The prospectus makes clear that there is no single model for the garden village projects that the Government expects to support and the intention is that a range of proposals, at different scales and in diverse locations, will be supported which may be on land either currently allocated for housing or currently outside of the Local Plan.
8. Longer term, the Government has stated that it sees the March 2016 prospectus as the start of a longer term opportunity for garden villages to be proposed and created across the country. It is therefore likely that subsequent calls for EOI's will be made beyond the deadline for the current round of EOI's on 31 July 2016.

Lugano Developments - The Dissington Estate

9. Since publication of the DCLG prospectus, the Council has been approached by a landowner and developer, Lugano Developments Limited, who have an interest in developing a garden village in Northumberland and working with the Council to prepare submission of an EOI.
10. Lugano Developments own a significant area of land north of Ponteland known as The Dissington Estate and the company has proactively and speculatively developed proposals for a garden village in this location of approximately 1800 dwellings with associated local services, facilities and infrastructure provision. The garden village would be developed entirely on land owned by Lugano Developments and, whilst physically separate from Ponteland, would be capable of delivering significant benefits to the town including the following:
 - 30% (540) affordable homes;
 - Ponteland Relief Road funded and delivered;
 - Ponteland Flood Alleviation scheme funded and delivered;
 - New education and leisure provision;
 - Creation of significant employment and R&D opportunities;
 - Enhanced community transport and infrastructure;
 - Enhanced sport and recreation facilities; and
 - Improved ecological potential and enhanced biodiversity.
11. Lugano Developments have previously submitted representations in relation to the emerging Northumberland Local Plan Core Strategy (NLPCS). Current proposals for the Ponteland area in the emerging NLPCS, which is currently out to consultation on Major Modifications to the Pre Submission Draft (consultation period ends 27 July 2016), identify The Dissington Estate as Green Belt land.

12. The land is not currently proposed for Green Belt deletion in the NLPCS and therefore further major modifications to the Pre Submission Draft document, requiring further public consultation, would be necessary to allow the garden village proposal to be brought forward through the Local Plan process. The Council would work with DCLG through the EOI process to enable the proposal to be brought forward through the Local Plan. In the event that the project is not selected by the Government as one of the 12 garden village schemes that it initially wishes to support, the Council would still proceed with modifications to the NLPCS to assist in the delivery of a new garden settlement for the reasons set out below.
13. In considering the approach to housing delivery the Council has, through the preparation of the NLPCS, shown in the housing trajectory that over the Plan period up to and including 2031 there are sufficient sites to deliver the objectively assessed housing need (OAN). This includes reliance on the delivery of a number of strategic sites that will deliver over the first 10 year period of the Plan. That position is maintained. However, the emerging NLPCS is clear that the OAN is a minimum housing requirement and recognises that there are opportunities to meet housing and economic growth opportunities to support the Plan so as to positively grow and diversify the Northumberland economy.
14. The DCLG prospectus (paragraph 24) indicates that garden villages should be considered over and above the OAN in order to deliver a step change in delivery and to meet the NPPF's objective of significantly boosting housing supply, in the context of a new settlement with the range of benefits that this can unlock. As such the garden village concept is not considered to challenge the well advanced approach to housing delivery currently set out in the emerging NLPCS but to offer an opportunity for additionality on housing delivery through a unique and ground breaking approach for Northumberland and indeed the North East region as a whole.
15. This would have the added benefit of bolstering the Council's approach to meeting the significant under-delivery of 1683 dwellings over the plan period from 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2015 (Northumberland Five Year Supply of Deliverable Sites Assessment 2015 - 2020) which the trajectory seeks to address by way of distributing the shortfall over the full Plan period rather than the first five years of the Plan as advocated in National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). The inclusion of an additional Green Belt deletion in the Core Strategy would add increased flexibility into the Plan in terms of housing delivery options, including scope to meet some of the housing shortfall within a shorter time frame and would be set in the context of the DCLG garden village prospectus, thereby not undermining the considerable work undertaken to date by the Authority or the approach in the current iteration of the Core Strategy Pre Submission Draft - Major Modifications (June 2016) consultation document.
16. Proposals for The Dissington Estate are still at a relatively early stage. However, Lugano Developments proposition represents a unique opportunity to create a new garden settlement in line with a highly important Government initiative aimed at accelerating housing delivery throughout the country. A new village with a clear and distinct sense of identity, but building upon the established and existing qualities and infrastructure of Ponteland and Darras Hall, would be created on land entirely under

the control of a single landowner and developer. The ability to deliver a garden village in this location with the resultant benefits for Ponteland in terms of, amongst other things, delivery of a Ponteland Relief Road and comprehensive Flood Alleviation Scheme which otherwise are unlikely to be delivered, is therefore particularly attractive.

17. On the basis of the above it is recommended that the Council submits an EOI to DCLG in respect of The Dissington Estate garden village proposal before the closing date of 31 July 2016. This would allow further work to take place on developing the proposal with Lugano Developments and would also provide the opportunity for the Council to work with the Government on bringing the scheme forward through the Local Plan.

Implications

Policy	The land proposed for The Dissington Estate garden village is not currently proposed for Green Belt deletion in the emerging Core Strategy. Further major modifications to the Pre Submission Draft document would therefore be required, requiring further public consultation, to allow for the garden village proposal to be brought forward through the Plan process.
Finance and value for money	The DCLG prospectus indicates that Government will provide a tailored package of support that could include a limited amount of funding towards, for example, the preparation of key studies and assessments and the appointment of specially skilled staff to assist in the delivery of the project.
Legal	None
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	None
Risk Assessment	None

Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	None
Carbon reduction	n/a
Wards	Ponteland West

Background Papers

DCLG Prospectus “Locally Led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities” (March 2016)

Report sign off

	Initials
Finance Officer	n/a
Monitoring Officer/Legal	
Human Resources	n/a
Procurement	n/a
I.T.	n/a
Chief Executive	
Portfolio Holder(s)	

Author and Contact Details

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