

Report of Director of City Development

Report to Executive Board

Date: 4th September 2013

Subject: Deputation to the Council by MARC (Morley Against Reckless Construction)

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Morley North and Morley South	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The Deputation raises a number of concerns regarding development and infrastructure issues in Morley. These include the need for new housing, the lack of infrastructure to support population growth, the lack of highway capacity in the Morley area, lack of cooperation with Kirklees Council and lack of consultation. These are important issues both locally to Morley and District wide, in responding to the strategic challenges faced in the delivery of regeneration and growth in a sustainable way, which respects local character and distinctiveness.
2. In responding to these important issues, the Council's response can be summarised as follows:
 - The overall housing requirement and overall distribution is set out as part of the Core Strategy, which has been subject to public consultation and has now been submitted for independent examination by a Planning Inspector. The Core Strategy is supported by a comprehensive evidence base, which take into account population and economic forecasts for the plan period,
 - As part of the Core Strategy and the emerging Site Allocations document, Morley is located within the Outer South West Housing Market Characteristic Area which has an overall target of 7,200 units (11% of the overall district wide total), a specific housing figure has not therefore been set for Morley itself,
 - In responses to comments received in the preparation of the Core Strategy, a key focus of the plan is to deliver housing growth on previously developed land, within existing settlements, as part of the settlement hierarchy, whilst

maintaining local character and distinctiveness and for this to be delivered in a sustainable manner,

- In responding positively and proactively to concerns raised regarding affordable housing and 'empty' homes, the City Council is pursuing a range of initiatives to stimulate the market and to address this,
- Planning longer term for the homes and jobs the District requires infrastructure and is an acknowledged challenge. The City Council is working closely with a range of service providers and funding agencies, to deliver necessary requirements, including Children's Services and Highways & Transportation.
- As part of the Duty to Cooperate and other mechanisms, the City Council works effectively and proactively with neighbouring authorities (including Wakefield and Kirklees) on a range of issues, including development proposals, to identify issues and to deliver positive solutions,
- Consideration of a planning application for housing had been adjourned to give further consideration to housing development issues. Consequently, this is not a case of the Council giving contradictory messages or decisions.

3. The issues raised are currently been considered as part of the Core Strategy Examination process and preparation of the Site Allocations plan, which will provide a basis to review policy and delivery matters.

Recommendations

4. Executive Board is asked to note the contents of this report.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To set out the City Council's response to the Deputation from Morley Against Reckless Construction (MARC)

2 Background information

- 2.1 MARC submitted their written deputation in early July 2013. The text is set out in full as Appendix 1.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The deputation raises a number of local concerns regarding the need for new housing, the lack of infrastructure to support population growth, the lack of highway capacity in the Morley area, lack of cooperation with Kirklees Council, lack of consultation and matters in relation to decisions on planning applications in Morley.
- 3.2 The deputation raises a number of valid and important concerns. Within this overall context, the Core Strategy seeks to provide a focus for regeneration and longer term growth and for this to be delivered in a sustainable way (underpinned by infrastructure) across the District.
- 3.3 In response to the Deputation the Council makes the following points:
- 3.4 The housing requirement and overall distribution is set out as part of the Core Strategy. This document has been in production for some time and has been subject to extensive public consultation and is currently subject to independent examination, following Full Council approval. The Core Strategy is supported by a comprehensive evidence base, which take into account population and economic forecasts for the plan period. Results of the Census 2011 vindicate the population growth that the Core Strategy is planning for.
- 3.5 Morley is located within the Outer South West Housing Market Characteristic Area which has an overall target of 7,200 units (11% of the overall total). Consequently, a specific housing requirement has not been set for the settlement. Within this context, it should be noted however that for the Outer South West HMCA, over 1,600 outstanding dwellings are already committed through allocations or planning permissions, land for around 5,600 dwellings needs to be identified in the Site Allocations Plan.
- 3.6 In reflecting consultation comments received and City Council priorities, a key focus of the Core Strategy is to deliver housing growth on previously developed land, within existing settlements, as part of the settlement hierarchy, whilst maintaining local character and distinctiveness and for this to be delivered in a sustainable manner.
- 3.7 In responding positively and proactively to the issues of affordable housing and 'empty' homes, the City Council is pursuing a range of initiatives to stimulate the market and to address this. Executive Board has previously considered a series of reports on these important matters.

- Planning for the homes and jobs the District requires infrastructure. This is a challenge across the District including Morley. Consequently, the City Council is working closely with a range of service providers and funding agencies, to address identified needs and to facilitate the delivery necessary requirements, including Children's Services and Highways & Transportation.

3.8 As part of the Duty to Cooperate and other mechanisms, the City Council works effectively and proactively with neighbouring authorities (including Bradford, Wakefield and Kirklees) on a range of issues, including development proposals. The impact upon highways in the Morley area (including the A62, A643, A650 and A653 on both sides of Leeds' administrative boundary) of additional development has already been identified through the Duty to Cooperate process as an issue to be considered in terms of appropriate phasing of new development and mitigation through use of Transport Assessments in relation to planning applications. The focus of this actively is to identify key issues and to facilitate positive solutions.

3.9 The Deputation makes reference to the decisions of Planning Panels and raises concerns that these have been contradictory in the Morley area. No details are provided of which sites are involved. It is understood that these comments may relate to the Daisy Hill site which was allocated as a phase 3 site in the 2006 UDP Review. Following the agreement to release both phase 2 and 3 housing sites by the Council's Executive Board in 2011. The Daisy Hill site was recommended for approval by the Chief Planning Officer. At the September meeting of the former East Plans Panel, members deferred the application mindful to refuse it. Following the reorganisation of the Plans Panels in September 2012, the application was referred back for determination by the new South and West Panel. The Chief Planning Officer could not support any grounds for refusal, and the planning permission was subsequently approved in October 2012.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 As this report simply provides a response to a Council Deputation, there is nothing to consult upon.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 The Deputation is essentially challenging the content of the City Council's Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan. Both these plans have been subject to Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and further EIA screenings will be carried out at the appropriate stages of their development to final documents. An EIA screening of this Executive Board report (attached as an appendix) reaches the conclusion that the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan are the appropriate documents to be subject to EIA because they determine policy and proposals.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 Preparation of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Plan are key corporate priorities.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 There are no resource/value for money considerations

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 There are no legal considerations.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 Town Planning as a process of managing land use change inevitably generates strong objections from people affected by plans and decisions. Therefore, the Council needs to be responsive to deal with concerns effectively.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The concerns raised in the Deputation are fully addressed in section 3 above. There are no matters that are considered to generate the need to make changes to policy or practice.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is asked to note the contents of this report.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.