

Developer Contributions SPD: Appendix C to the Executive Report

Notes of the Scrutiny Working Group Tuesday 22 September 2020, Burnley Town Hall

Present:

Members: Councillor B Foster

Officers: Kate Ingram, Strategic Head of Economy and Growth and
Elizabeth Murphy, Planning Policy Manager

Apologies: Councillors H Baker and L Pate

Prior to the meeting members were provided with a brief report, a copy of the responses and a copy of the SPD. The group were advised that a further response was awaited from Lancashire County Council on the subject of secondary education contributions. Officers attended the meeting to present the consultation responses and to answer questions.

Councillor Foster echoed officers' appreciation of all those, and in particular the members of the public, who has taken the time to comment on the SPD. The unavoidably technical nature of the SPD's content was noted.

Three substantive issues were discussed:

1. The priority given to the 'Green Agenda' - Cllr Foster explained that members wanted to ensure that contributions for the energy efficiency, renewable energy and Green Infrastructure were prioritised. It was clarified that many of these matters are not met through contributions but through the implementation of Local Plan policy and the building regulations; but that contributions for affordable housing and non-green infrastructure have impacts on scheme viability and prioritisation and flexibility in respect of non-critical contributions will be necessary to ensure development meets the Local Plan standards in respect of these 'green matters'. The SPD categorises open and play space required under Policy HS4 and mitigation for protected species impacts as priority 1 - Necessary and Critical which must be provided irrespective of viability; whereas on and off-site other Green Infrastructure was priority 2c where viability could be considered - but only insofar as it does not compromise achieving an acceptable form of development.

2. Similarly, Cllr Foster explained that members wanted to see high quality developments in terms of architectural design. Whilst the policies for design are set out in the Local Plan, it was also proposed to prepare a separate Design Guide SPD. As with the previous discussion, if the collective costs of contributions make a scheme unviable, developers will seek to address this viability gap e.g. through the use of cheaper materials or increasing scheme density - and again prioritisation and flexibility is required.

3. Education Contributions: Officers explained that LCC had been contacted for a further response in light of the DfE comments on the draft SPD, particularly regarding secondary education contributions; and a response was awaited. Cllr Foster felt members would be supportive (subject to considering LCC's response) of allowing greater flexibility e.g. using the borough boundary or 3 miles whichever is the greater, especially in order to ensure that scheme quality could be maintained and affordable housing contributions could be made.

The Working Group was generally supportive of the SPD and the prioritisation it sets out.