

Development Market Panel minutes

13th January 2016.

Present

Adam Beamish- WYG
Adrian Cooper- Hadley Cooper Associates
David Holmes- Shanly Group
James Matcham- Barratt Home
Paul Dickinson- Paul Dickinson and Associates
Peter Francis- Windsor Homes
Richard Jones- Carter Jonas LLP
Richard Watkins- Aston Mead
Valerie Scott- CGMS
Hannah Cook- Spelthorne Borough Council
Ian Maguire-Runnymede Borough Council
Cheryl Brunton- Runnymede Borough Council

1 Introductions

-Panel members were welcomed and the purpose of the panel was explained.

2 Terms of Reference

-The ToR was discussed. Officers asked if meeting twice a year seemed reasonable and panel members agreed that the regularity and timing of meetings would depend on the milestones of the new Local Plan.

-A member of the panel stated that it would be useful to have a registered provider and local enterprise partnership representation on the panel: officers confirmed that they had been invited to sit on the panel on more than one occasion but there had been limited interest. A query was raised that affordable housing consultants could be approached in the absence of a RP, but it was deemed unlikely as consultants are expensive, unless they would be willing to attend panel meetings free of charge.

-A panel member asked whether all sites would be looked at but officers felt that as there were over 100 sites that have been submitted for consideration in the SLAA, consideration of typologies would be preferable so officers could apply viability assumptions to all sites as each site is required to have a write-up.

It was suggested by the panel, therefore, that a simple grid of what general viability issues officers wanted considered on sites could be prepared and the panel could make comment on these.

-It was agreed that the sites officers believe would be allocated through the Local Plan should be looked at by the panel [*action: site write-ups for the Resultant Land Parcels (Green Belt review parcels of land that consultants believe could be included in the urban area) will be sent to the panel*]

to look at via email and comments received that will be used by officers to feed in to the SLAA write-ups]

3 Local Plan update

-Query regarding GB review and whether Arup be reviewing the evidence in time for issues and options consultation. Officers advised this would not be the case as there is limited time at this stage to do so, but Arup will be reviewing and so comments made about the review can be received and will be responded to at various points through the development of the Local Plan.

-Officers advised that it was hoped the March issues and options consultation would include draft land allocations

-The interim SLAA will be published in advance of the pending consultation as it forms part of the evidence base.

-a panellist raised a query as to whether the Government had been clearer in what it meant by its deadline 'early 2017 for councils to produce Local Plans'. Panel was informed that a footnote to the most recent comprehensive spending review stated that 'early' meant by 1st April 2017 and 'published' meant submitted to SoS.

4 Discussion of site typologies

Resultant land parcel

-The Arup GB review identified parcels of land that did not meet the purposes of Green Belt so well and were recommended could be included in the urban area. These Resultant Land Parcels (RLPs) was discussed during the panel meeting and officers had suggested at a density of 50 dph, utilising the Franklands Drive development in the borough. There was general consensus from the panel this level represented the top of a realistic density range for development. Officers were advised that greater flexibility to allow a balance of tenures should be included when assessing the site: therefore development at a lower density and to provide a range of development potential would be beneficial.

-The panel also informed officers that they would be wary about applying this general development density to other sites. The number of houses delivered would also depend on the size of the dwelling (and national standards should be utilised). *[Action: it was agreed that all resultant land parcels would be sent to the panel members for their technical advice on achievability].*

-Panel members also asked about car parking as this site was not near a train station, although officers advised it was well connected by bus. Officers also advised the County would be modelling transport impacts of potential land allocations.

-The SLAA submission in relation to the site stated the owner would consider self-build on site. There followed a general conversation about self-build. There is an issue on larger sites and members

indicated this would overly restrict development, and therefore self-build was not yet considered a viable form of development. It was agreed on a smaller scale that self-build would be viable (approx. 5-10 units). Self-build would certainly not achieve 50 dph. If self-build could be offset against affordable housing, this might be viable.

-The panel confirmed there is a lot of interest in building starter homes and is considered a more viable option and one likely to be able to be delivered at higher density.

-In terms of viability considerations in the north vs south of the borough, RBC is a relatively solid market and other than pockets of more viable areas, the considerations are the same.

Urban Greenfield

-There are noise issues to consider on sites near the motorway. The panel advised being near to the motorway reduces values significantly; however in a location such as Runnymede where demand is strong, this is largely irrelevant.

-Same principles apply to AQMA areas; less so because people do not seem to be aware of air quality.

-Access on larger sites would need to be considered (Surrey design guide indicated there is a 300 unit limit for providing one access point).

GB PDL

-On a site such as this, providing 2-3 units by reusing existing buildings is not viable and one of the panel members thought the site could achieve more. Given the height of the buildings, there was not much scope.

-On a more general note, one of the panel advised that flats are good near to train stations, but the further the walking distance from a train station (500m), flats become less desirable.

-The presumption in favour of brownfield land in GB in the pending Housing and Planning Bill could make this type of site policy compliant and would be good for starter homes. However, if the site were not located near a train station, would this make it an unsustainable location and therefore not comply with the bill?

Urban PDL

-Heights of buildings could potentially be an issue, as could be out of keeping with character of area.

-Would there be car parking? There was general consensus that such a development would be marketable with no parking, but one member felt no parking could cause long term issues in the future.

-It was also asked whether these types of development would include amenity space. Officers asked whether balconies would be sufficient and it was agreed they would be.

-In the north of the borough, RHUL has a strong influence. One of the panel members said Egham is one of the most accessible locations in Runnymede and some may seek pp for financial gain i.e. to sell land and make a larger profit if it has permission for housing.

-Same general rules apply in south of borough and would probably viable for conversion, rather than rebuild

-Each site in this kind of location is unique; therefore applying a general density to all sites of this nature is not possible.

Greenfield GB

-The particular site looked at was at risk of flooding and one of the panel members asked how accurate the base mapping was as the EA last completed a detailed assessment in 2010.

-It was also discussed that sites at high risk of flooding can be affected in their ability to get a mortgage; therefore being capable of developing a site in Floodzone 3 in policy terms could be academic if it wasn't possible to secure a mortgage. However, the panel also brought up that the Government is now providing their own insurance so this could overcome such concerns. And with appropriate mitigation in place, homeowners can re-insure their homes.

-On a general note, a GB greenfield site is usually in an unsustainable location. If such a site was sustainable but likely to flood, other uses could be considered. Means of escape needs to be considered.

It was agreed that a virtual panel would be set up to discuss sites although some members preferred to have face to face meetings.

5 AOB

None identified