

Appendix 3 – Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations to Cabinet (Minutes from meeting 16th March 2022)

9. Skills Supplementary Planning Document

ARobinson took the report as read and provided an overview, noting that the report looks to provide a new SPD to allow the council to require developers to deliver skills and apprenticeship training as part of developments. The proposal is that the document is consulted on before returning to the Committee and then going to Cabinet and Council.

Cllr Birnie noted that this was an interim advisory and would return to the Committee.

Cllr Timmis referred to the Social Value Strategy and that it would be delivered within S106, stating that this would be an additional charge on developers. ARobinson confirmed it would be a further obligation on developers to provide skills and apprenticeship training for residents of the borough. ARobinson stated that costs would be low as many organisations already have apprenticeship levies and schemes in place.

Cllr Wilkie thanked ARobinson for the report and asked how approved delivery partners are selected. ARobinson confirmed the report was created by Clare. On the delivery bodies, ARobinson clarified that the council has the option to contract out the implementation of the SPD to a third party and that this third party would work with the developer to get social value strategies in place. The council are yet to make a decision on whether there should be an approved partner, though the consultation provides the information for clarity.

Cllr Birnie asked if the delivery body would be paid for by the developer. ARobinson explained the developer is required to put the strategy in place and there would be an administration charge to put that process in place. ARobinson added it would be enforced through planning regulations and S106. Cllr Birnie asked if there would be a charge to the council. ARobinson confirmed that costs would be with the developer and the council's only role would be around obligation.

Cllr Wilkie agreed with the principle of the programme and asked who would take responsibility of the stated thresholds. ARobinson stated that the SPD would set out the charge per sqm or dwelling and this would be communicated to the approved delivery partner. ARobinson added that the threshold could not be so low that every house would need to implement a strategy though they need to ensure medium to large developments are captured. ARobinson reminded the Committee that this is still a consultation and that thresholds could be revised.

Cllr Wilkie asked if there would be a timeframe for the apprenticeship. ARobinson advised that this would depend on the development. Obligations for residential developments exist during the development whereas non-residential developments would broadly have a requirement for construction and operational phases.

Cllr Birnie commented on the shortage of building operatives and that developers would likely be in support of finding apprentices.

Cllr Harden referred to item 2.6 in the report, noting that the council could chose to resource directly or appoint an external body but that the report assumes an approved delivery partner will deliver this. Cllr Harden noted that much of the concept focuses on the 18-21 age group and encouraged that the proposal look at all ages. Cllr Harden also noted the wording in item 2.6 of 'council will provide support to developers to help them access local networks, providers and

schools', stating that this appeared bureaucratic and suggested that an ADP manage this. ARobinson took the point on age ranges and confirmed that the focus was not intended to be only on school leavers. On the council's involvement, ARobinson advised that it would be to provide local intelligence and ensure the ADP understands what the local issues are.

Cllr Stevens commented on the threshold and asked if the 30-house limit was a finger-in-the-air number. ARobinson confirmed that this number could be reviewed and could be changed if it was felt it was not appropriate.

Cllr Stevens asked if any other planning authorities have a similar programme in place. ARobinson stated that the Dacorum is now in the minority by not providing it and that many London boroughs are more advanced in this area.

Cllr Stevens queried if the proposal has been put to developers. ARobinson explained that many developers are already running this scheme elsewhere and they would make representations known during the consultation process. Testing is being rolled out to applications in the system and so far none has questioned this.

In response to a question from Cllr Foster, ARobinson confirmed that thresholds are required and that the proposed figure will sit with an algorithm, though the formula needs to be set up on how many apprenticeships are required per development.

Cllr Foster noted the reference to the Social Value Act 2012 and asked how this is currently applied in Dacorum. ARobinson stated that he was unable to provide an answer on this and could take the question to the relevant colleague.

Cllr Beauchamp queried if local colleges have confirmed places will be available. ARobinson confirmed that they would contact colleges as part of the consultation process to ensure the skills gaps in the boroughs are matched by available courses.

Cllr Beauchamp asked if the provision of green space is part of the part of S106 and would include the Chilterns beechwood. ARobinson stated that developers have to pay into a mitigation strategy for the beechwoods and there would be a likely threshold for developers to provide onsite open space or pay towards the provision of open space. Cllr Beauchamp asked if this provision would be shared with other authorities. Cllr Birnie intervened to point out that that infrastructure can of course be handled by S106 agreements, but the beechwoods were irrelevant to the item under discussion. ARobinson agreed that this was not a matter associated with the Chilterns beechwood. Cllr Birnie requested that Cllr Beauchamp raise his question at a more appropriate forum.

The report was noted.

ACTION: ARobinson to check how the Social Value Act 2012 is currently applied in Dacorum.