

## Whorlton Village Neighbourhood Plan - Reg.16 Consultation Responses

### Summary of representations received by Durham County Council as part of Regulation 16 Submission Draft publication and submitted to the independent examiner pursuant to paragraph 9 of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act

The formal six week publicity stage for submitting representations covered the period 4<sup>th</sup> January to 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

#### Durham County Council REG. 16 Comments

DCC has considered its role in the Submission consultation process carefully and has concluded that it is appropriate to comment on the content of the Submission Plan.

In accepting the WVNP for submission DCC made a number of suggested changes to the Draft Plan and these were mostly taken on board by the Parish in the Submission Draft version. In that response DCC also commented that... *“As we have said before on a number of occasion, there are policies in the Plan that would be difficult to implement or are more statements of intent rather than policy, and you could have added more detail that in our opinion would have provided more protection, e.g. defining open spaces to protect or auditing all of the non-designated heritage assets so that Policy WP5 was more robust. ...In conclusion I hope you find these additions and alterations acceptable and despite our reservations set out above it is the parish’s plan so as we consider that you have now met the procedural requirements set out in the regulations, the Plan is now suitable for submission”.*

DCC would now further reiterate the following comments to clarify how it considers the WVNP could be further improved through the Submission consultation:

#### **Policy WP1 Housing provision:**

**DCC COMMENT:** The Policy sets a target of 10 units in the plan period based on local survey but proposes a “half term” review. DCC acknowledges the local desire to limit growth but it is appropriate to allow limited small scale development in a small village such as Whorlton bearing in mind advice at para 55 of the NPPF that development in one village may support services in that village and villages nearby. There are currently a couple small scale housing proposals in the village that may see the 10 units set out in the policy reached immediately but if WVNP were to be adopted after they gained approval they would not count as part of the 10. In view of this situation, it is suggested that the policy should be amended as follows to provide more clarity and to introduce a further criteria to provide more control of where development would be considered:

The target housing provision is 10 dwellings (approx 3 bungalows and 7 family dwellings) in appropriate locations, ~~over the duration of the Plan until 2025~~. Permission will be granted if the development:

- a. is in keeping with the scale, form and character of its surroundings
- b. does not significantly adversely affect the amenities of residents in the area, including daylight/sunlight, privacy, air quality, noise and light pollution
- c. has safe and suitable access to the site for all people
- d. avoids the loss of best and most versatile agricultural land, and
- e. is not on an area of undeveloped land, including residential curtilage, that contributes to the character of the village

It is proposed to re-assess the future housing need at the half term of the Plan (2025).

In addition, support will be given to affordable ~~Starter Homes for the first time buyers under 40~~ in accord with Government guidelines.

Efforts should be taken to prevent rise in numbers of empty or underused properties in the village.

#### **Policy WP5: Protection of the historic environment:**

**DCC COMMENT:** DCC welcomes the intention to review the WVNP with reference to a Conservation Area Character Appraisal – with Neighbourhood Area and Conservation Area boundaries reviewed as necessary (Plan para. 7.5.8) although any changes to the Conservation Area boundary would be dealt with by DCC. However, the timing of this review is unclear. Although the Plan period is to 2035, DCC would suggest that a review be carried out for 2021, about 5 years after adoption to allow a revised WVNP to reflect the findings of a CACA.

#### **Policy WP6: Amenities:**

**DCC COMMENT:** The overall nature of the Policy is supported and DCC understands the desire of the local community to protect and maintain facilities, but questions the ability of a NP policy to influence provision of litter bins and street lights. As an alternative DCC suggests that the lines in WP6 relating to Bins and street lights be moved to the supporting text and the following new final line be added to the policy:

**Where necessary developers will be expected to enter into a planning obligation with the Local Planning Authority to deliver improved amenity facilities in the Village resulting from the additional needs generated by the development.**