

REPORT TO COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Executive Member for Growth

REPORT NO: SEG 33

DATE: 19th January 2017

TITLE:	Announcement of Government Support for the proposed Spitalgate Heath Garden Village and SKDC's inclusion within the Starter Home Land Fund Partnership Initiative	
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	Not Applicable	
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Councillor Bob Adams Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Growth	
CONTACT OFFICER:	Steve Ingram - s.ingram@southkesteven.gov.uk Telephone number: 01476 406007	
INITIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS: Equality and Diversity	Carried out and Referred to in paragraph (7) below Equity analysis is not applicable in respect of this report	Full impact assessment Required: Not applicable at this stage
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:	This report is publicly available via the Your Council and Democracy link on the Council's website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk	
BACKGROUND PAPERS		

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That Council welcomes the announcement of Government support for the proposed Spitalgate Heath Garden Village and SKDC's inclusion within the Starter Homes Land Fund Partnership initiative.
- 1.2 That Council also notes that as SKDC will be the applicable Local Planning Authority, for both Spitalgate Heath and any Starter Home developments, the details of the proposed Garden Village and any proposed Starter Homes will obviously need to go through all the requisite formal planning processes.

2 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 To update Council regarding the successful outcomes of our submissions to the Government's Garden Village Prospectus and the Starter Home Land Fund Initiative.

3 DETAILS OF REPORT

Background – Garden Villages

- 3.1 As Members will be aware the Council, acting in respect of its statutory role as the Local Planning Authority, is required to proactively plan to meet the future housing and employment needs of our area. Accordingly land at Spitalgate Heath (described as the Southern Quadrant) has already been identified in the Council's adopted Core Strategy as being suitable to help meet those needs - with the proposed development concept being that it would be brought forward as a typical sustainable urban extension.
- 3.2 However in 2016 the Government promoted and then invited appropriate submissions to be made to its Garden Villages, Towns and Cities Programme which is intended to encourage and locally support the delivery of such high quality new residential and employment locations in ways that are even more attractive and sustainable. In essence Garden Villages are envisaged as being proposals to create high quality new places to live and work within attractive, very green, environments.
- 3.3 Having regard to the essential quality of the prospective development site at Spitalgate Heath, especially in terms of the opportunities that can be created by its topography and also via its relationship to the river corridor, it was considered, after extensive discussions with the major landowners Buckminster, that it could potentially positively benefit from re-designation as a Garden Village (in terms of promoting a slightly different character of development i.e. as a more free standing settlement that would appropriately mimic the established pattern of satellite villages located on the edge of Grantham).
- 3.4 Accordingly an appropriate submission was made to the Government in August 2016 (and a copy of our prospectus, which was prepared in-house, is attached to this report for Members information).

Background – Starter Homes

- 3.5 During 2016 the Government also asked for expressions of interest from forward thinking Local Authorities to work with the Homes and Communities Agency to access Starter Home funding opportunities in order to pilot the early delivery of this new type of national affordable housing option (starter homes are broadly defined as being new dwellings that are available for purchase by qualifying first time buyers at a price which is 20% below local market value).

The Announcements

- 3.6 Informally in late December, and then formally on 4th January, the Government announced the outcome of its consideration of the 50 plus national submissions that had been made to the Garden Village programme. We are very pleased to say that Spitalgate Heath was announced as being one of only 14 national Garden Village projects that the Government wished to positively support (and a copy of the announcement letter is attached for Members information).
- 3.7 On 4th January the Government also announced that nationally they would be looking to support 30 Starter Home Land Fund Partner Authorities and that SKDC had been selected and so designated.

Next steps

- 3.8 The Garden Village designation brings with it direct delivery enabling funding in the region of some £200k and the offer of additional forms of technical and specialist support. As SKDC is currently dealing with several major development and growth initiatives this additional potential capacity support will be very helpful in ensuring that we can proactively work with the landowners in order to create a really special new community for South Kesteven.
- 3.9 SKDC's designation as Starter Homes Partner Authority will also allow us to proactively look to encourage the early appropriate provision of this new housing option in order to help us meet the districts housing needs. Members will be further updated as more of the proposed legislative and operational details become known.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Success within these national 'competitions' is to be welcomed. It is considered that the Garden Village designation will help us encourage a really high quality of sustainable development on this important strategic site - and that becoming a Starter Home partner authority will help us to encourage and deliver a wider range of innovative housing delivery options.

5 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 We could have chosen not to engage with the Garden Villages Prospectus and the Starter Home Partnership - but those would have been a missed potential opportunities to support the delivery of high quality new homes and employment opportunities within South Kesteven.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The indicated additional Garden Village capacity funding is to be welcomed. What potential support will be associated with the Starter Home initiative has yet to be clarified.

7 ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPACT ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The sustainable growth of the district will be positively supported by the award of these designations.

8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None.

9 COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

- 9.1 None.

10 COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

- 10.1 Members are reminded that, as with any proposed development, an application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the applicable formal planning processes.