

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting6th November 2008

1. Title of Item/Report

Local Development Framework:Interim Student Accommodation Policy Guidance

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that sought approval of policy guidance on student accommodation in the Borough, produced to inform decisions on student accommodation planning applications. This effected applications currently under consideration and provided a longer term view to include policies on this issue in the Core Strategy and Regeneration Development Plan Documents.

The recommended policy for the Core Strategy was “Major planning applications for student accommodation will have to demonstrate how they will meet a proven need for the development; are compatible with wider social and economic regeneration objectives; and are conveniently located for access to the University and local facilities.”

The North Shore development was considered to be the preferred location for further purpose built accommodation for students. This site was recommended to be identified for student accommodation in the Regeneration Development Plan document as it already had planning permission.

At present Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council had no planning policies to guide officers when dealing with planning applications for student accommodation. The Local Plan contained no specific targets or precise allocations for this particular use and previous applications for student accommodation indicated that there was no clear consensus about the amount and type of accommodation that was required. It was uncertain what impact student accommodation was having on existing residential areas around the Borough, but this study had shown that it was not a significant issue.

National Government policy on housing did not offer any particular guidance on student accommodation. The adopted Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) emphasised the importance of the region’s further and

higher education establishments to the economy but offered no direct guidance on the provision of student accommodation.

Therefore, the purpose of the report was to consider the evidence on student accommodation and to set a policy for guiding planning officers on how to deal with current applications for student accommodation and gave clear guidance for prospective developers through statutory planning policy in the future.

It was recommended that the Draft Student Accommodation Study was adopted as interim policy guidance which could be used to determine planning application decisions with immediate effect. This was because, as part of the LDF process, the Core Strategy policy could not be adopted until Autumn 2009, as it had to be assessed as part of an independent examination.

RECOMMENDED to Council that:-

1. The Draft Student Accommodation Study be accepted as an accurate reflection of the current position and provision of Student Accommodation in Stockton and projected student growth.

2. The Draft Student Accommodation Study be accepted as interim policy guidance, which can be used to determine planning applications with immediate effect.

3. The following policy recommendations for the Core Strategy be endorsed:-

“Major planning applications for student accommodation will have to demonstrate how they will meet a proven need for the development; are compatible with wider social and economic regeneration objectives; and are conveniently located for access to the University and local facilities.”

4. The policy recommendations to identify North Shore as the preferred location for future student accommodation in the Regeneration Development Plan Document be endorsed.

3. Reasons for the Decision

It was recommended that the Draft Student Accommodation Study be adopted as interim policy guidance which can be used to determine planning application decisions with immediate effect. This was because, as part of the LDF process, the Core Strategy policy could not be adopted until Autumn 2009, as it had to be assessed as part of an

independent examination.

Durham University and private letting agents in Stockton indicate that there was a sufficient supply of student accommodation over the short to medium term.

If purpose built accommodation was not taken up then problems may arise in the future from difficulties adapting the layouts into accommodation for non- students and also with car parking provision associated with the developments.

The Core Strategy policy was considered to be flexible enough to respond to increasing student numbers, as the University was expected to grow over the longer term, and this would impact on both the type and quantity of student accommodation required over this longer time frame.

The policy addresses sustainability issues, by including the requirement that major applications were conveniently located for access to the University and local facilities, and were compatible with wider regeneration objectives.

The North Shore planning approval was considered to be the preferred location for further purpose built accommodation for students over the longer time frame as it would be well integrated with the future development of the campus and also with the existing site via a foot bridge. It was a mixed use site which was of strategic importance to the Borough.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

None

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not Applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not Applicable

Proper Officer
10 November 2008