



Dalston Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting

Number 5

2pm 8th January 2014 at The Victory Hall, Dalston

Present:

Cllr. Chris Drouet (DPC)[CD]; Cllr. Ollie Rickerby (DPC)[OR]; Ian Turnbull[IT]; Ann Byers[AB]; Cllr Pauline Dalton (DPC)[PD]; Cllr. Bryan Craig (DPC Vice Chairman) [BC]; Judith Wilson [JW]; Tony Furniss[TF]; Liz Auld[LA]; Cllr. Ronnie Auld (DPC Chairman)[RA]; Cllr.Trevor Smith (DPC)[TS]; Cllr. John Kelsey (DPC)[JK]; Jayne Potts (CRHT)[JP]

Minutes

1. Apologies;

Zoe Sutton (CCC)[ZS]; Richard Woods (CCC)[RW]; David Wilcock[DW]

2. Presentation of The Dalston Housing Needs Survey

Jayne Potts[JP] of The Cumbria Rural Housing Trust

Jayne gave an explanation of where the data came from using sources such as, The Cumbria Observatory, National Census information, etc. and most importantly the survey questionnaires sent out to every household and business in The Parish recorded by Council Tax and Business Rate records.

The return for Dalston Housing Need Survey (DHNS) was above average .Out of 1180 residential properties surveyed, 382 responded, 32.46%.

Unfortunately out of 91 businesses surveyed only 3 returned, 3.29%.

AB informed the meeting that this was an expected outcome so a sub group of the SG were working on a further strategy to include more input from business. A further discussion came to the conclusion that contact needed to be made to owners of



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businesses in The Parish who are non-residents. This would apply to the DNP “Visions” Survey.

RA asked Jayne how farms, which are businesses, would be included in the DHNS. Jayne advised the meeting that in the Council Tax records, farms are designated as non-domestic rated properties and therefore in the DHNS are included in the Residential section.

Jayne has sought further clarification from CCC Council Tax Office; Farmhouses which are lived in by the farmer are designated as residential. Farm buildings are exempt as they are agricultural. Only if a business is registered on the premises would it be considered as a business in the Council Tax Register.

Jayne informed the meeting that the most significant group to come out of the survey were those wishing to down-size from a large family house to something small and fuel efficient. However, most of those responding in this way were not considered “in need” due to the equity they held in their existing property. The issue here was lack of suitable housing available on the open market.

Second to this were a large number of respondents who demonstrated a housing need due to low income, or first time buyers without sufficient savings for a deposit to satisfy a lender for a mortgage.

An issue that Jayne researched further was that the above respondents were not aware that it was essential to register with the various housing associations in order to become eligible for any type of “Affordable Housing”.

PD said that this was an issue which would be taken back to Dalston Parish Council to consider, local advertising/information initiatives.

Action: PD Take this issue to PC for consideration.

Another issue to come out of the DHNS was the aspiration of a large number of respondents to moving to a bungalow type of property. Jayne pointed out that this was an indication of an aging population. However, it is to be expected as Cumbria has one of the largest aging populations in the United Kingdom.

RA raised the issue that quite a large number of new properties built in The Parish, whilst having been through the planning process do not appear to be considered in the overall totals recognised by Cumbria City Council Planning when future developmental need is being considered.

A discussion followed considering the need for one and two bed homes. One bed houses were impractical to build and are only an issue due to the recent bedroom tax



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for those on benefits or assisted housing. The general opinion was that this issue would not continue for long due to the difficulties that arise from this political initiative! However the need for small affordable homes is still a major issue for the residents of Dalston Parish and it is recognised that there is not sufficient stock of these to meet demand in the open market, rental or affordable/assisted purchase categories.

Shared ownership was also discussed and the issues of lack of understanding by the public about this type of assisted purchase and also the “stigma” perceived by some in taking this route to purchasing a home. This was also something that could be addressed by Dalston Parish council.

Action: PD Take this issue to PC for consideration.

There was some further discussion about the recent Story Development given permission to build 121 houses over the next 3 years in the centre of Dalston village.

Jayne said it would be interesting to do a follow up survey in 3 years’ time to see if the housing needs of the Parish had changed/diminished after this development had taken place.

It could be said, that as CCC Planning hasn’t done a full survey of housing need in Dalston since January 2005 and this follow-up survey should be commissioned by them.

Action: CD To incorporate into the DNP

RA asked if CRHT produced an Annual Report as this would be useful to identify trends in housing need across the County. Jayne said they did and she would forward an electronic copy for distribution to members.

Action: JP To send CRHT Annual Report to CD for distribution.

A discussion continued covering issues that would be relevant in the DNP;

A village feel is paramount; majority want it to stay that way; ageing population; housing types; housing need for young families; Traffic, services and waste water disposal etc. Developments should be of a high quality build (highly insulated leading to lower running costs) and include a superfast broadband connection as standard.



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Also discussed was the matter of downsizing being an aspiration but when it became a reality turned out not practical due to the small size of some modern properties.

Jayne also raised the issue of empty homes.

From Council Tax records, it is apparent that there are 16 long term empty premises in the Parish. It was suggested that if these could be made available they could go some-way to alleviating some of the housing need. In some circumstances there can be grants available to improve and make habitable properties that have fallen into disrepair.

However, it was mentioned that some or all of these could be empty due to developers waiting for the market to improve before doing any work on these properties. This needs further investigation in conjunction with the CCC Empty Property Officer.

Jayne also investigated properties for sale in the Parish using the Right Move website. This can be output in map form.

Action: JP to send a copy of this map to CD for distribution.

Jayne continued to go through the maps and charts included in the report detailing any significant points.

After a final discussion about affordable housing Jayne made the point that, derived from Land Registry records of property transfers that affordable housing very rarely came up for sale in Dalston Parish and in general the turn-over of property was very low.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to Jayne for her work producing the DHNS and leading such an enjoyable presentation.

There was further informal discussion whilst refreshments were served.

The meeting ended at 16.10 but the doors were finally closed at 17.05.