Implementation of New Housing Opportunities in the Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan Area.

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CCBE Research Note

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Introduction

The purpose of this note is to assess opportunities for new housing development that will meet local needs within the Spring Boroughs neighbourhood. The Spring Boroughs community has formed a Neighbourhood Forum with the aim of producing a Neighbourhood Plan for the area that will be an inset in the Central Area plan of Northampton Borough Council.

One of the most critical issues for local people is the shortage of socially rented family houses with gardens to rent. This research note explains why family housing is important for the community and what opportunities exist for providing this type of housing within the Neighbourhood Plan area, and sets out ways in which it could be delivered.

The objectives of the research are:

1. To briefly review the literature on community-led housing
2. Provide evidence of need for family housing for rent in Spring Boroughs
3. Assess the potential of sites for new housing
4. Examine options for delivery of new housing on these sites
5. Suggest ways of ensuring community involvement

Background

Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood is located close to Northampton Town Centre. It is a largely residential area with high levels of deprivation. Most of the existing housing is one and two bedroom accommodation to rent with significant over-crowding because of a shortage of family housing. There are very few existing vacant sites potentially available for new development within the Neighbourhood Plan area and each has its own complexities and challenges which are explained in detail below, but they are critical to the success of the Neighbourhood Plan. Please see attached Map 1. Neighbourhood Area.

The community decided in 2012 to begin the process of drawing up a Neighbourhood Plan (under the terms of the Localism Act 2011). In 2013, a Neighbourhood Forum comprised of local residents and other stakeholders, with the help of the Borough Council, the University of Northampton and Locality, has begun to assemble an evidence base and develop policy options for the plan.
The emerging documentation and guidance for Neighbourhood Plans in England and Wales says that Plans should be “deliverable” i.e. credible, justifiable and achievable. The Plan should ideally include an implementation plan when it is submitted for formal Examination by an Independent Examiner (DCLG, 2011; and Neighbourhood Guidance by North Somerset Council; Broadland District Council; Bedford Borough Council). The Herefordshire Partnership goes further in recommending an Action Plan with aims, responsibilities of different partners, costs and a timetable. In these examples, the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan has equal importance to the policies in the plan itself.

To achieve change in Spring Boroughs it is likely that a range of innovative delivery mechanisms will need to be considered by the community to ensure appropriate new housing and regeneration schemes take place. Thus, the main focus of this paper is on opportunities for community-led development.

It is intended that this research note will be circulated to the Neighbourhood Forum for discussion in the autumn.

**Community-Led Housing Development: What are the Options?**

Community asset ownership - community ownership of local leisure facilities, workshops, shops, and housing – as a goal of community development and community action has expanded rapidly in recent years (Wyler, 2009). One of the most important reasons for seeking community-led housing is to secure affordable housing for local people with rent levels, ownership, tenancy conditions, and design under community control.

Several different forms of community asset ownership and management have emerged for promoting community-led housing;

- Community Development Trusts – where a community trust is established to take forward a range of local initiatives and social enterprises (see Locality.org.uk)
- Community Land Trusts (CLTs) – where a community trust owns land or buildings often in order to develop it for community purposes (see web site of the CLT Network)
- Co-operative Housing- where a group of families or friends designs, builds and occupies housing and community facilities on a communal basis (see Co-Housing in Britain ed. Bunker.S; et al 2011)
- Co-housing – where a house is custom built for a homebuyer or when individuals or communities build homes for themselves (see web site of the National Self Build Association)
- Arms Length Management Organisations for social housing (ALMOs) – where tenants jointly manage their own, social rented, properties – see web site of the National Confederation of ALMOs

While there are different legal and community ownership models, there have common features;

(a) An active community organisation that has a clear long term vision for community-led housing
(b) Support from the local authority through its planning, housing and community development policies
(c) A legal structure to enable the community to enter into financial, trading and landownership arrangements
(d) Ability/funding to access the skills necessary for the community to become a developer in its own right
(e) Land or buildings becoming available for purchase or use
(f) Ability to put together a funding package often involving negotiating with a range of public, private, individual or charitable bodies

The forerunners of many of these initiatives were the community action movements of the 1980’s that spawned Community Development Trusts of which one of the best known is Coin Street Community Builders (see CSCB, 2008). These Trusts had to engage in long campaigns to have land transferred to them and did not have access to dedicated funding streams but established their own funding mechanisms from local authorities, and private finance often with the proceeds of commercial revenues from some of their activities. Similarly, ALMOs for former Council stock have been in existence for some years.

However, by the 1990s Government both centrally and locally began to recognise the value of community led development from an economic and social/political point of view, developing a range of community programmes and funding opportunities (Colenutt, 2011).

As mainstream low income and affordable housing provision has fallen, community-led alternatives have become increasingly attractive, and in some cases, the only solution to local housing shortages.

Since 2000 several new funding streams for community-led development have been created by public, private and charitable sectors. For example, the Housing and Communities Agency (HCA) funds a range of community-led housing schemes, including for Self Build, Custom Build and Community Land Trusts. The HCA website lists schemes they have part funded, highlighting nationally known projects such as those at Holy Island; Buckland Newton; and Allendale. (http://homesandcommunities/community-ledhousing). Most of these schemes are small-scale (2-20 units), located in rural areas or in villages, aimed at local people who need affordable housing.
This expansion of community-led development has continued in spite of significant barriers to communities in acquiring land; difficulties of accessing finance; and challenges of establishing local skills and organisation (Bailey, 2010).

The Localism Act and Sources of Funding

The Localism Act 2012 introduced a range of new measures to encourage community-led planning and development.

(a) Neighbourhood Plans to enable parishes or Neighbourhood Forum to prepare plans which, following independent examination and a local Referendum, would be incorporated into local authority Local Plans.

(b) The Community Right to Bid allows communities to nominate sites and buildings as “Assets of Community Value” which if agreed by the local authority are placed on a register. If one of these sites comes onto the market for sale or change of ownership, communities have the right to bid for its purchase and are given time to bid and raise finance for purchase. They do not have a pre-emptive right to buy (or obtain a discounted price) but they are given a realistic chance to bid. Note that the owner is not required to sell to the community bidder.

(c) The Community Right to Build allows a community organisation to bring forward its own small scale development proposals, which, if confirmed by by a referendum after independent examination can go ahead without planning permission. In other words the Community right to Build enables a community to undertake development within a defined area, with the community deciding its own type, quality and design, without going through the normal planning process in the local authority.

(d) Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs) allow local communities to grant planning permission for certain types of land use that are important for the community e.g. low carbon housing or housing, or housing for the elderly. The Order must be subject to independent examination and referendum before it can be exercised.

In relation to finance, the principal sources of public funding available for communities to acquire land and buildings and undertake their own development are:

- Bidding into the HCA Affordable Housing Fund (the current funding round is for 2015-2018) using their Community Led Project Support application form. Help in applying can be obtained from HCA regional office for the East Midlands. It is expected there will be further rounds of HCA founding for community led development beyond 2018
- Specific funding from the HCA for Custom Build housing
- Funding for CLTs under the Community Right to Build also from the HCA
- Bidding for funding from the local authority for a slice of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Local communities are able to obtain a “top slice” of CIL income received by local authorities from development taking place across their jurisdiction.

These funding sources are subject to competitive bidding but they do provide important encouragement to community groups, including Neighbourhood Forums, which wish to implement their plans.

Whether any of these options or sources of funding are relevant for Spring Boroughs or any other neighbourhood depends upon local circumstances. Critically, whether there is any possibility of the community (through a community trust) taking ownership of land or buildings because private owners are looking to sell or change the use of a site (see section X below); or whether the community wish to take management responsibility for local authority housing or open space. If these opportunities materialise, the community would need to move quickly to create a trust structure, identify finance and make a bid. There may be a case for the Neighbourhood Forum to create a skeleton trust which can be mobilised quickly should it be needed.

Evidence of overcrowding and need for family housing with gardens

The Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan Draft Issues, Ideas and Possible Directions Report, approved by Spring Boroughs Forum in June 2014, took the issue of creating opportunities for SB residents to move into social/affordable family sized housing without leaving the area as its first objective.

“The most important issue that has been identified in the early stage of the preparation of Spring Borough’s Neighbourhood Plan, is the need in for more social/affordable family sized houses with private amenity space. This fact is likely to be embodied in the NP, when the Neighbourhood Forum (Spring Boroughs Voice) considers the land use balance sheet in Spring Boroughs. This extreme housing need is brought about by high levels of overcrowding in the overwhelming provision of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments, often above ground level with no private gardens.”

The statistical evidence is difficult to tie down but the 2012 Census shows 10% of the population to be overcrowded compared with 5% for the UK average. Through 18 month’s work in the area and one-to-ones with scores of families, it is clear that the overcrowding is under-enumerated.

Spring Boroughs Voice Steering Group is unanimous in its acknowledgement that this is the most pressing issue in the area. Without substantial new housing construction provided for existing overcrowded families to decant from unsuitable flats, it will not be possible to take

Spring Boroughs Residents Survey 2011

In 2011, BMG Research was commissioned by Northampton Borough Council to undertake a survey amongst the residents of Spring Boroughs. The survey aimed to provide baseline information that would assist the Council in planning the regeneration of the area and inform future discussions about improvements to the area and to residents’ homes.

The section on the housing profile of residents showed that just over two in ten respondents had been living in their property for under a year (25%), around four in ten (39%) had lived there for two to five years, and just over three in ten (34%) had lived there for over five years. Over five in ten were Council tenants (56%); two in ten (20%) are tenants of private landlords and a similar proportion (17%) are tenants of housing associations. Around one in twenty are freeholders i.e. owner occupiers (5%), or leaseholders (3%). The majority of respondents live in a flat (82%) and just over one in ten (14%) live in a maisonette. A small proportion of the residents (4%) live in a house. Close five in ten (47%) live in a one bedroom property, and four in ten (41%) have two bedrooms. One in ten (12%) have three bedrooms, but few have more bedrooms than this.

For the purposes of this research paper the following salient points should be particularly noted from Residents Survey:-

1. 88% of residents have only two or fewer bedrooms
2. 96% of residents do not live in a house with a garden

Census 2011

Ed Dade, Senior Planning Officer, Northampton Borough Council has recently examined the neighbourhood statistics from the 2011 census. The data does not correspond with the Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan Area and parts of three Lower Super Output Areas (021E, 021F, 021C) have been used. A map of showing the boundaries and LSOA statistics are attached as Appendix 1.

The household occupancy rate (bedrooms) data indicates that if a household has surplus bedrooms (+1, +2 or more), or too few bedrooms (-1, -2 or less). From the data it appears that roughly 10% of households in the LSOAs (including Spring Boroughs) are overcrowded (too few bedrooms), whilst <5% of households in Northampton, East Midlands and England are overcrowded. This data was sourced from www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk website.
NBC Housing Register

The Housing Choice and Resettlement Team at NBC Housing have given some information on the subject of overcrowding from the Housing Register. Their records show that, at the time (April 2014), there was only one applicant on the Register in Spring Boroughs area who has general (not statutory) overcrowding and none with Statutory overcrowding. This means that one household, who currently resides in Spring Boroughs has applied to the Council (via the Housing Register) to be re-homed, due to general overcrowding. At first look, it may appear that overcrowding may not be the problem that all those who live in and represent the area seem to think. This seems to suggest that although overcrowding is a problem, it has not been acted upon by residents by applying to be re-homed. There could be a number of reasons for this, particularly as the housing stock in Spring Boroughs is quite uniform. It may be that residents perceive that there is limited choice in the area, and there may be a resignation that asking to be re-homed is futile. However, this is speculation.

Through case work and the weekly Drop-Ins at the United Reformed Church over a year and a half, Councillors and members of Spring Boroughs Voice are able to testify to many cases of real overcrowding amongst residents in Spring Boroughs. There are many cases where a family have a permanent bed set up in the lounge for a family member to sleep. This situation will normally be associated by the lack of private amenity space. Obviously such an arrangement will almost certainly put extra strain on a family, already suffering from high levels of deprivation.

Councillor Danielle Stone has raised a question to Northampton Borough Council seeking information on the numbers of households in Spring Boroughs, who face this situation. At the time of writing Councillor Stone was awaiting the answer.

Sites with potential for new houses

There are a number of potential privately owned sites that could become available during the 15 year life of the plan. The sites in question are currently zoned for employment in the Central Action Area Plan or are in the heritage zone but could be changed to residential within the Neighbourhood Plan subject to finding employment land elsewhere in the area. This change is not seen as insuperable. Indeed it is likely that land owners will be motivated to develop residential. However, if the housing that emerged were privately owned or flatted development, it would not meet the needs of the community identified above. There is a real danger to Spring Boroughs that the opportunity would be lost if the landowners submitted housing proposal that were permitted by the local authority before the Neighbourhood Plan was ready.
Potential Intervention Sites

The policies in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan will need to be tested on their capability to be implemented, by an examination of potential sites and buildings. If suitable sites are not in existence or are not capable of becoming available, the policy will be very weak. The sites, in question, may be vacant sites awaiting development or sites and buildings, which may well or could potentially change during the Neighbourhood Plan period to 2030.

At an early stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process, the Neighbourhood Forum considered those sites in Spring Boroughs that could change their land use and be redeveloped in line with the planning objectives in the Plan. A map showing these sites is attached as Figure 1.

The sites in question are as follows:-

1. Grafton Street/Lower Harding Street/Compton Street-known as the former Honda Motorcycle Garage-this site is cleared and vacant and is the subject of a recent planning application.
2. Super Sausage Café/Lorry Park/Plumbing Supplies St Andrews Road
3. Collingwood Business Centre, Lower Harding St/Scarletwell St/ Compton St-operating as offices, dance studio, retail, car wash
4. Wedge Roofing, Monks Pond Road-roofing supplies and open storage
5. PDSA (now vacant), Monks Pond Road
6. Volvo Penta/Exhibition Supplies, Monks Pond Road
7. Lock-Up Garages/Incidental Open Space, Lower Bath Street
8. Salvation Army/Kingdom Life Centre/Springs Family Centre/Car Park, Mayorhold
9. Grafton Street/Grosvenor Casino/Regent Street
10. Site of Northampton Castle/Marefair/Chalk Lane

Site 10 is the subject of a comprehensive study led by Northamptonshire County Council, partnered by NBC and Churches Conservation Trust. The results of the study and the public consultation exercise are awaited. As a consequence the sites in this zone are not part of this study at the present time. Sites 5 and 6 have been excluded as they are in active employment use at the current time (although PDSA/Vetsave has moved out of their premises, it is anticipated that the building will be re-let). Sites 8 and 9 have also been excluded from this study and planning changes will be more likely to happen towards the end of the NP period.
This piece of work will concentrate on sites 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7, which are capable of land use change in the near future (See Figure 1).

Blue colour indicates potential intervention in 3 years. Red indicates intervention in 15 years.
Figure 1. Potential Intervention Sites

Main sites with potential for housing
Site 1 Grafton Street/Compton Street/Lower Harding Street (former Honda Motorcycles) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Grafton Street/Compton Street/Lower Harding Street

Area-0.54 ha/1.34 ac

Land use: cleared vacant site

Capacity for 3 bedroom houses with gardens @ 20 homes per acre*—27 houses

*This density figure is a conservative estimate allowing for reasonable space standards inside and outside.

Unconfirmed ownership: Shell UK Pensions
Site marketed: Yes for about 4 years as a cleared site. Value not known.

Planning application: N/2014/0600 Erection of 36 dwellings comprising 12 x 3 bed; 12 x 2 bed houses and 12 x 2 bed flats by Westleigh Developments. The development is intended as social housing managed by Orbit Housing RSL but this is not stated within the planning application.

On a Chairman’s casting vote, the application was refused by NBC Planning Committee on 29th July. The reasons for refusal were:- 1. Poor design and layout 2. Loss of employment land 3. Poor road layout.

Support for the application was organised by the Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan Forum.

It must be a rare occurrence in the field of planning development control, where a local community supports a new housing development, which is then refused by the local planning authority. In this case the community have expressed, through the Draft Issues, Ideas and Possible Directions Report of the Neighbourhood Plan, that there is an urgent need in Spring Boroughs for non-flatted development to reduce overcrowding of families and to give families in need the facilities that are seen as basic requirements for other people.

Since the Planning Committee meeting, representatives of Spring Boroughs Voice have met the developer, the prospective registered social landlord, the planning consultant and the architect for this scheme.

Changes to the mix of house types-fewer flats, more houses, improvements through ‘Secure by Design’ and minor changes to the highway have been given in principle affirmation by representatives of the Forum. The intention is to put the new design to a Spring Boroughs Voice meeting and to make a new planning application.

The policy reason for refusal i.e. the land is zoned for employment purposes in the Central area Action Plan (CAAP), cannot be addressed by a redesign. The emerging Neighbourhood Plan is expected to propose that the Super Sausage Café/Drainage Supplies site on St> Andrews Road will be earmarked for employment purposes. There is a clear intention of Spring Boroughs Voice to zone the Grafton Street site for social houses with gardens. Until the Neighbourhood Plan is approved in 2015, it will be difficult to give weight to it in a planning decision. However, it does demonstrate the rationale of Spring Boroughs Voice in supporting the development of houses on this site.

**Site 2 Super Sausage/Lorry Park/Plumbing Contractor**

(See Figure 3).
Figure 3. Super Sausage/Lorry Park/Plumbing Contractor

Area 0.8 ha/ 2.0 ac

Land use: café, lorry park, plumbing contractor

Unconfirmed ownership: Northampton Borough Council freehold; leases to occupiers-possibly at an end.
The café is an historic converted slipper baths with some architectural merit, which is a very familiar landmark in this part of Northampton. Efforts should be made to incorporate the best parts in a new development. The site is adjacent to Waterside Enterprise Zone and would be more appropriately planned as an employment area. Situated on the west side of St. Andrews Road it would be environmentally challenged as a residential area.

In the circumstances it is likely that this site will be included in the Neighbourhood Plan as an employment zone. This proposal would address the employment area zoning for the above three sites in the Northampton Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) 2013. The notation for the employment zone on the map, accompanying Policy 24 Spring Boroughs, states, “Employment area to be retained or reprovided elsewhere within the regeneration site”. Thus the terms of the CAAP could be largely met by the land use changes proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Site 3 Collingwood Business Centre-Lower Harding Street/Compton Street/Spring Lane

(See Figure 2).

Area 0.285 ha/ 0.705 ac

Land use: offices, dance studio, retail, car wash

Capacity for 3 bedroom houses @ 20 per acre----14 houses

Unconfirmed freehold and lease ownership: possible short term lets and private (non-plc) freehold

Site marketed (in entirety): No  Value not known.

Planning applications: Recent approvals for conversion of some offices to retail. No applications for comprehensive redevelopment or for housing.

This site and its buildings has recently been the subject of an application to list it as an Asset of Community Value under the Localism Act. The application has been made by Spring Boroughs Voice Neighbourhood Forum to Northampton Borough Council. The justification of community value centres around the spaces used for community facilities and the community dance studios. There are few other non-religious community spaces available in Spring Boroughs for use by groups. The outcome of the application is awaited.

This site is located close to Spring Lane Primary School, which is being extended to become two form entry. It is located centrally within Spring Boroughs and could be a site of new housing and community facilities, subject to its role as an asset of Community Value. Its viability for residential development would be enhanced if the Grafton Street site became new housing and the site to the south, owned by Wedge Roofing, also changed its use to housing.
Site 4 Wedge Roofing Supplies, Monks Pond Road

(See Figure 2.)

Area 0.32 ha/0.79 ac

Land use: roofing materials sales and storage

Capacity for new houses @ 20 houses per acre----15 houses

Unconfirmed ownership: Wedge Roofing Ltd.

Marketing: None. It is thought that the roofing supplies business will close on this site within one year.

Planning Applications: none relevant

It would be beneficial if this site and the Collingwood Business Centre were married together to give more opportunities for creating a well-designed place overall. Putting the two sites would probably allow the possibility of creating space for a community facility.

Site 7 Lower Bath Street

(See Figure 4).

Area 0.29 ha/0.73 ac

Land use: Lock up garage court and incidental green space.

Capacity for new houses @ 20 houses per acre-----15 houses

Unconfirmed ownership: Northampton Borough Council Housing

Marketing: None

Planning applications: None

It is thought that few of the lock up garages are used regularly by residents for parking their private cars. If it were thought that the lock up garage court was not being used fully as an asset to the residents, it could be possible to create a viable new houses site. As a Council owned site, the value could be held to assist with specialised housing that would be difficult to accommodate on a private site. The Neighbourhood forum has suggested that a scheme of self-build houses could be an appropriate option.
Community Participation in New Housing Development Proposals

Spring Boroughs Voice Steering Group was invited to join with the architect and planning consultant of Westleigh Development to make preparations for a new planning application.
for the Grafton Street/Compton Street site. The developer suffered a refusal at NBC Planning Committee on 29th July. This planning application is referred to above. Local Councillor Danielle Stone and Clive Ireson, Chair of SBV, spoke eloquently in favour of the scheme for 24 houses and 12 flats but the vote was to refuse on the casting vote of the chairman of the committee. This close engagement with developers at the design stage could become the norm to the benefit of Spring Boroughs as a whole. It may be desirable for Spring Boroughs Voice to consider the possibility of creating a standing group of members to take a long term role in design matters.

Role of the University of Northampton in the implementation of Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan

The Collaborative Centre for the Built Environment (CCBE) attached to the Faculty of Social Sciences, has been undertaking research work on issues related to the Localism Bill and, now, the Act since 2010. Initially a survey of the reactions and responses of local authorities in Northamptonshire and Milton Keynes was used to guide the university response.

During this exercise the university responded to a request from members of the Spring Boroughs community to support them in the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. Following discussions with Northampton Borough Council, an application for ‘Front Runner’ grant for Spring Boroughs was made and was approved. In March 2013, the university’s bid to provide an Independent Chair of Spring Boroughs Forum to formally establish the Neighbourhood Forum and to start the Neighbourhood Plan process was selected in a competitive tender process.

In May 2014, Spring Boroughs Voice elected a Chair and Co-Vice Chairs from residents and workers in Spring Boroughs. At this point Andy Clarke, Independent Chair of Spring Boroughs Voice stepped down and reverted to a voluntary planning advisory role. Spring Boroughs Voice is now supported by advice from two members of Locality/Planning Aid, following a successful bid for direct support.

There remains a need for further support on the many planning and development issues that will arise in the implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is proposed that the university should sanction volunteer planning support for Spring Boroughs Voice over the period of the production of the Plan.

Conclusions

The clear first objective of the Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan is to identify opportunities to provide affordable family houses with gardens to counteract the problems caused by the current housing stock imbalance of 95% one and two bed flats and
maisonettes with no gardens and the reported severe overcrowding. This study has shown that there is land available or land that could become available in Spring Boroughs to provide houses for local people and that rezoning of employment land in the CAAP to housing in the Neighbourhood Plan would be a justified change to the development plan.

Could the process of identifying sites and bringing them forward for new housing be assisted by a community development trust or ALMO or any of the measures in the Localism Act identified above? An action plan for implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan would in any case be needed as part of the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan and in this context identifying delivery methods to ensure the plan is implemented is recommended.

A community development trust or similar community-led housing body should be considered if it was able to acquire sites or buildings and undertake development on some of the key sites with housing potential identified in this report. To create a trust would be a significant undertaking that would require support from Locality, the Borough Council and other bodies, but it has been done successfully in many parts of the country. There is a case for discussing funding opportunities with the HCA as soon as possible.

At the same time, there is also a case for considering a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) for Spring Boroughs which would give the community a powerful planning tool for ensuring that family housing was prioritised in the Neighbourhood Plan. Under the Order, there would be a presumption that planning applications for family housing in the neighbourhood would be granted consent. It would effectively make the community the planning authority as far as determining the use of key sites.

In order to create a community trust or an NDO, the community would need technical and community development assistance to establish these mechanisms alongside the Neighbourhood Plan process. Community involvement is the key all of these initiatives. It is proposed that Dr Bob Colenutt should be made available to Spring Boroughs Forum to conduct a briefing on the alternative forms of community ownership.

The stated purpose of this paper is to inform the implementation of Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan. In looking at the over provision of flats and maisonettes of 2 bedrooms or less, it is clear that the evidence shows that Spring Boroughs needs more conventional houses, especially of 3 bedrooms or more. This is needed, not only to give more diversification of house type as required by the Central Area Action Plan, but to provide a decent living environment especially for families with children. In addition privately and local authority sites, currently zoned for employment uses, could be allocated for new houses with gardens. The evidence shows that the Super Sausage site could be used to compensate for the loss of employment land on other sites. In other words, we can conclude that the Neighbourhood Plan proposal to reallocate sites 1, 3 and 4 from employment use to residential is justified by the evidence.

**Recommended Actions**

**Neighbourhood Plan Policies and Projects** - recommend to Spring Boroughs Voice that sites 1, 3 and 4 should be allocated for new houses with gardens for families in the NP. Recommend that Site 2 be allocated for employment use in the NP.
Action by SBV/Locality/CCBE/NBC-immediate

**Community-led Housing Development** - it is proposed that CCBE could offer a briefing to Spring Boroughs Voice on this subject. Such a briefing should connect with similar initiatives being pursued in Northamptonshire. It is recommended that SBV have early discussions with the emerging ALMO. It is recommended that SBV consider the establishment of a community development trust and a Neighbourhood Development Order.

Action by CCBE/Locality in association with SBV and other related projects in NCC area-immediate

**Localism Act and Sources of Funding** - it is proposed that CCBE should support Spring Boroughs Voice in effecting the listing of certain buildings as Assets of Community Value. CCBE should work with SBV on funding for specific housing funds. It is recommended that SBV liaise with Homes and Community Agency in respect of special funds for housing development.

Action by SBV/Locality/CCBE/NBC

**Sites with Potential for New Homes** – it is proposed that CCBE assist SBV with planning and development advice.

Action by CCBE/Locality/NBC-immediate

**Community Participation in New Housing Development Proposals** - CCBE should work with SBV over the possibility of establishing a sub-group to focus of design matters in development proposals.

Action by SBV/CCBE-immediate

**Role of the University** - CCBE could support volunteer planning support over the period of the period of the production of Spring Boroughs Neighbourhood Plan.

Action by CCBE/SBV-immediate

**Broadcast of the Document** - CCBE should pass this report to Spring Boroughs Voice, Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire County Council, English Heritage, councillors, Spring Boroughs Residents Association, Locality as soon as possible.

Action by CCBE-immediate

**Service Level Agreement** - It is proposed that discussions should be held as soon as possible between CCBE/SBV/Locality/NBC and others in certain cases, in respect of the apportionment of responsibilities of the participants. The participants should consider the resource requirements and give advice to SBV on potential sources of assistance. This process should lead to a service level proposal to be put before SBV for agreement.

Andy Clarke and Bob Colenutt – 9th September 2014
References

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Appendices:
APPENDIX 1. 2011 Census LSOA areas