

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended)
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

PLANNING STATEMENT

AND DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

ON BEHALF OF COWBIT HOMES LIMITED

Development of 32 Affordable Dwellings

Land South of Moulton Chapel Road, Cowbit, Lincolnshire

Ref: SM_0150_R_01
LPA: South Holland District Council
Date: September 2018

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement accompanies and supports the planning application submitted on behalf of Cowbit Homes Limited for the development of 32 affordable dwellings on land to the south of Moulton Chapel Road, Cowbit.
- 1.2 The application site has the benefit of an existing out planning permission for a development of up to 17 dwellings, with a requirement by planning permission for one third of the total units to be provided as affordable housing. The current scheme represents an increase in the density of the development in order to provide 100% of the proposed 32 dwellings as affordable.
- 1.3 The scheme has been the subject of pre-application discussions with the local planning authority which have informed both the design and the mix, type and tenure of the proposed affordable housing.
- 1.4 This planning application is supported by a range of technical reports which have been commissioned to assess the suitability of the site for residential development. Some of the accompanying reports, including the Archaeological Evaluation, Landscape Review and Noise Assessment Report were prepared in support of the previous outline planning application but their findings remain accurate and relevant to the new proposals. In addition to these, a new Ecology Report, Flood Risk Assessment, Foul and Surface Water Drainage Strategy and Surface Water Drainage Scheme have been prepared in support of the current scheme.
- 1.5 Chapter 2 of this statement provides an overview of the application site and its planning history, and Chapter 3 sets out a description of the proposed development. Chapter 4 sets out a review of the planning policy relevant to the determination of the planning application. Chapter 5 provides a Design & Access Statement explaining the general principles which have informed the scheme, and Chapter 6 provides an assessment of the proposals against planning policy and other material considerations.
- 1.6 The assessment concludes that the proposed development is in accordance with up to date planning policy, noting that the NPPF para. 11 presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged in this instance, and that the principle of development is established by the extant permission for residential development on the site. The significant provision of affordable housing is also identified as a material consideration which weighs heavily in favour of the scheme. It is concluded that the proposals are entirely suitable for the granting of planning permission.

2.0 Application Site & Planning History

- 2.1 The application site comprises an irregular shaped area of arable agricultural land extending to 0.98 hectares, located immediately to the south of Moulton Chapel Road at the eastern edge of the village of Cowbit.
- 2.2 The site adjoins the developed residential area of the settlement to the west. It is bounded to the south by mature hedgerow beyond which a drain is located running in parallel with the site. To the north across Moulton Chapel Road are commercial premises and a single dwelling. The site is enclosed on the east side by the A16 roundabout junction with associated landscaping along the eastern boundary of the site.
- 2.3 The site is located just outside the settlement boundary of Cowbit as established in the South Holland Local Plan (July 2006). Cowbit is identified in the emerging development plan as a Minor Service Centre where development of an appropriate scale will be supported. The village has a number of facilities including a village store located on Barrier Bank, and bus stops providing an hourly service into Spalding.
- 2.4 The Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning demonstrates that the site is largely located in Flood Zone 1 – lowest risk – but areas toward the northeast and east of the site are encroached by areas of Flood Zone 2. Accordingly, this application is accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment.
- 2.5 There is no existing vehicular or pedestrian access to the site, but it is accessible directly from Moulton Chapel Road as there is no existing pedestrian footway or kerb on the south side of the highway.

Planning History

- 2.6 The application site has the benefit of an outline planning permission, ref H01-0035-17 dated 17th July 2017, for a residential development of up to 17 dwellings. The permission includes a vehicular and pedestrian access point onto Moulton Chapel Road in a similar location to that now proposed. The permission is subject to planning conditions including a requirement for one third of the total residential units to be provided as affordable housing.

3.0 Description of Proposed Development

3.1 The proposed development comprises 32 no. affordable dwellings situated along a new road designed to adoptable standard running in parallel with Moulton Chapel Road, via an access junction located at the west end of the northern boundary. The following drawings accompany the planning application to define the proposals:

- Site Location Plan
- Drawing CWB-2018-001 – Proposed Site Layout
- Drawing CWB-2018-002 – Existing Site Layout (Topographical Survey)
- Drawing CWB-2018-003 – House Type Design 3-Bed Semi
- Drawing CWB-2018-004 – House Type Design 2-Bed Unit 3-Block
- Drawing CWB-2018-005 – House Type Design 2-Bed Semi
- Drawing CWB-2018-006 – House Type Design 1-Bed Unit
- Drawing CWB-2018-007 – House Type Design Bungalow
- Drawing CWB-2018-008 – Fence Details

3.2 The following reports and technical drawings are also provided in support of the planning application:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by Greenlight Environmental
- Noise Assessment Report prepared by Blue Tree Acoustics
- Landscape Review prepared by Robert Doughty Consultancy
- Archaeological Evaluation prepared by Archaeological Project Services
- Flood Risk Assessment prepared by ARP Associates
- Foul and Surface Water Drainage Strategy prepared by ARP Associates
- Drawing 1834/02/SK02 – Foul & Surface Water Drainage Design

3.3 The scheme incorporates private gardens, landscaping and areas of public open space along the northern boundary and in the southeast corner of the site. Existing trees on the western boundary of the site, and hedgerows on the southern and eastern boundaries, will be unaffected by the scheme.

3.4 In respect of housing mix the scheme comprises 8 no. 3-bed units (883 sq ft each), 14 no. 2-bed units (732 sq ft each), 4 no. 2-bed bungalows (614 sq ft each) and 6 no. 1-bed maisonettes (490 sq ft each). The scheme has an overall housing density of approximately 32 dwellings per hectare.

4.0 Relevant Planning Policy

Legislative background

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan

- 4.2 The current adopted development plan comprises those policies of the South Holland Local Plan (July 2006) which have been saved following the Direction of the Secretary of State on 18th July 2009 to delete certain policies of the plan. The new draft Local Plan has been prepared jointly with Boston Borough Council and Lincolnshire County Council and is currently at Examination in Public. Pending the adoption of the plan, its policies carry limited weight in the determination of planning applications.

South Holland District Council Local Plan (Adopted July 2006)

- 4.3 Policy **SG1** sets out principles of general sustainable development, stating that proposals will be granted where the quality of life for residents is unimpaired or enhanced, reasonable measures have been taken to conserve energy and natural resources, and South Holland's essential character and main environmental assets are not damaged.
- 4.4 Policy **SG2** deals with the strategic distribution of development across the authority area. It establishes a sequential approach giving priority first to previously developed land within settlement limits, then greenfield land within settlement limits, and finally (of relevance to these proposals) to land adjacent to defined settlement limits. It also requires that proposals make efficient use of land, ensure that development is served by a choice of transport modes, and ensure acceptability in respect of traffic generation and highway safety in the area.
- 4.5 Policy **SG3** identifies Cowbit as a Group Centre settlement, where a moderate level of growth will be supported.
- 4.6 Policy **SG4** deals with development in the countryside, stating that planning permission will only be granted for such development where it is essential in the proposed location and cannot be accommodated within the defined settlement limits. In respect of housing development, it should be noted that Policy SG4 is superseded by Policy HS7 which is detailed below.

- 4.7 Policy **SG14** addresses the design and layout of new developments. It sets out a range of criteria for assessing the design quality of proposals, and states that development which would have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the locality will not be permitted.
- 4.8 Policy **SG15** states that new development proposals should provide safe and convenient access for motor vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians and people with disabilities, and that this should be reflected in particular through the layout and design of new roads.
- 4.9 Policy **SG17** deals with the protection of residential amenity. It requires that decision making on planning applications should take into account any overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing or overshadowing, noise nuisance and levels of smell, emissions and pollutants when considering whether to grant planning permission.
- 4.10 Policy **HS7** sets out the policy approach to new housing in the open countryside. Among its criteria (of relevance to the current proposals) it is permissive of new housing development in the open countryside where it is for small scale rural exception affordable housing complying with Policy HS9.
- 4.11 Policy **HS9** deals with the provision of affordable housing. It sets out the requirements for affordable housing in connection with schemes which principally aim to deliver market housing.

The National Planning Policy Framework (“the NPPF”) July 2018

- 4.12 The revised NPPF was published in July 2018. It sets out the Government’s overarching planning policies relating to both plan-making and decision-taking. It is applicable to the determination of planning applications both in that development plan policies which are not in accordance with relevant policies in the NPPF are considered to be out-of-date – causing the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development to be engaged – and as a principal material consideration in its own right.
- 4.13 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development. For the purposes of decision-taking this means **“approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay,”** or, **“where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless,”** of relevance to these proposals, **“ii. Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”**

- 4.14 Section 5 of the NPPF sets out policy relating to the delivery of housing. It reiterates the Government's objective of **"significantly boosting the supply of homes"** to meet the needs of all groups including the need for affordable housing. Paragraph 64 requires major developments to provide 10% of homes for affordable home ownership unless (of relevance) the scheme is exclusively for affordable housing.
- 4.15 Paragraph 77 of the NPPF states that **"local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs."**
- 4.16 Paragraph 123 addresses housing densities, and states that **"where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site."**
- 4.17 Paragraph 127 sets out overarching aims for good design applicable to all development proposals. These include the requirement that schemes should be **"visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping,"** and should be **"sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting."**

Status of the Development Plan in Respect of Housing Development

- 4.18 The NPPF specifies (para. 11 footnote 7) that for applications involving the provision of housing, in situations where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, development plan policies governing or restricting the supply of housing will be considered out-of-date.
- 4.19 The most recent South Holland District Council 5-Year Housing Land Supply Assessment sets out the local planning authority's position as at 31st March 2018. On the Sedgefield method the Council's own assessment concludes that there is a 5-year supply with 20% buffer of 4 years. Under the Liverpool method it finds an equivalent supply of 5.5 years. We consider that the Sedgefield method should be relied upon in this case because it reflects the NPPF requirement for existing under-supply to be addressed within the first five years of the local plan period.
- 4.20 On this basis it is considered that the local planning authority cannot current demonstrate a 5-year supply plus 20% buffer. Policies relating to housing deliver are therefore considered to be out-of-date and the NPPF para. 11 presumption is engaged.

5.0 Design & Access Statement

Design Principles

- 5.1 The design of the proposed development has been led by the constraints of the existing site, which lends itself to in general to the creation of two rows of housing along a central access road running in parallel with Moulton Chapel Road to the north.
- 5.2 Incorporating advice received in the course of pre-application discussions, dwellings have been sited along the frontage with principal elevations facing onto the main road, in order to maintain the urban character and grain which is evident throughout the village. The frontage is set back from the highway by necessity due to the presence of sewerage assets, but this in turn affords an opportunity to provide an attractive landscaped setting to the scheme.
- 5.3 Within the site, private gardens have been located so as to maintain generous separation distance between the proposed residential blocks and between the scheme and the nearest existing residential properties located immediately to the west.
- 5.4 A variety of house types have been employed which will ensure variation in design throughout the scheme and help to avoid a sense of monotony. The variation in building footprint and grain throughout the scheme also reflects the urban grain of the village of Cowbit which comprises both traditional ribbon development along the B1357 and more recent estate developments.
- 5.5 The design of the proposals responds to the site constraints and wider setting by setting aside an area of public open space in the southeast corner of the site, affording privacy from the main road and natural surveillance from proposed dwellings at the eastern end of the site. The scheme as a whole is well contained within the natural screening formed by planting along its southern and eastern boundaries, and in respect of its western boundary and frontage onto Moulton Chapel Road it will form a natural and attractive extension to the existing village.

Access Principles

- 5.6 The scheme benefits a safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access point onto Moulton Chapel Road which has been previously approved under the outline planning permission. Within the site, the access road is designed to adoptable standard with pedestrian footways on both sides and safe manoeuvring for domestic, refuse and emergency vehicles via the turning head located at the eastern end of the site.

6.0 Assessment of Proposed Development

Principle of Development

- 6.1 The principle of residential development on the site is established by virtue of the extant outline planning permission H01-0035-17 for the development of up to 17 dwellings. However, in light of the increased density proposed it is also appropriate to provide an assessment of the relevant development plan policies.
- 6.2 Policy SG2 establishes a sequential approach which lends support, albeit of a lower priority, to housing developments on land adjacent to defined settlement limits, as is the case for the current proposals. Policy HS7 is also supportive of small-scale rural exception sites for affordable housing development in the open countryside. As the scheme comprises 100% affordable housing, these policies establish support for the proposed development in principle.
- 6.3 Notwithstanding that the development plan is supportive of the proposed development in principle, it must be noted that because the local planning authority cannot currently demonstrate an appropriate 5-year supply of housing sites (plus 20% buffer) the NPPF para. 11 presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged. This establishes that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The detailed assessment below demonstrates that any adverse impacts of the scheme will be limited in nature, whilst the benefits in the form of the delivery of affordable housing carry significant weight.
- 6.4 Due to the increase in housing density on the site between the extant outline planning permission and the current proposals, from circa 17dph to 32 dph, paragraph 123 of the NPPF is applicable to the new scheme. It states that where there is an existing shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs – as is the case in South Holland – it is especially important that planning decisions avoid homes being built at low densities. In light of the revised NPPF policy and the current supply situation in the authority, it is considered that the extant outline planning permission achieves too low a housing density for the site, and would represent an inefficient use of land which has been deemed suitable for residential development. The current proposals achieve a density which is much more closely aligned with the aims of the NPPF, and should be supported on that basis.
- 6.5 The proposed housing mix will provide a range of affordable homes suitable to meet a range of needs between 3-bed family homes and 1-bed maisonettes. The provision of bungalows will contribute to the availability of accommodation suitable for elderly

residents and people with disabilities. The housing mix has been derived from an assessment of affordable housing need in the authority area, and as a result the scheme will make a balanced contribution towards overall housing need.

Design, Character and Residential Amenity

- 6.6 The design principles and assessment set out in Chapter 5 of this statement demonstrate that the proposed development achieves a high standard of design. It will result in a legible, attractive extension to the village in a landscaped setting. Within the site, the variation in design will help to avoid a sense of monotony and established an attractive neighbourhood character to the site.
- 6.7 In respect of residential amenity, it is noted that the design establishes generous separation distances from the nearest existing residential properties to the west in particular, and to the north across Moulton Chapel Road. As a result, the scheme does not introduce any issues of overlooking, loss of privacy, overbearing or overshadowing. Within the site itself, the arrangement of the proposed dwellings ensures individual privacy, with the provision of generous private gardens reflecting the typical urban grain throughout the village, whilst providing natural surveillance to areas for parking and public open space within the site.
- 6.8 It has been identified that the proximity of the A16 and roundabout junction with the B1357 has the potential to result in noise impacts affecting future residents. The findings of the previous Noise Assessment Report remain relevant, and these demonstrate that the site is suitable for residential development subject to the mitigation measures set out in that report. These measures may be secured via planning conditions.
- 6.9 In its wider context, as demonstrated in the accompanying Landscape Review, the proposed development is located so as to take advantage of the existing natural screening along its southern and eastern boundaries. Its impact on the character of the wider landscape will therefore be limited, and from most viewpoints it will be perceived as a natural extension to the village in an attractive landscaped setting.
- 6.10 For these reasons it is concluded that the proposed development will meet the aims of the NPPF in respect of design quality as set out at para. 127, and also accords fully with the relevant requirements of the development plan as set out in Policy SG14.

Transport and Access

- 6.11 The proposed development makes use of the previously approved vehicular and pedestrian access point from Moulton Chapel Road. This junction offers good visibility

in both directions and it is considered to provide safe and convenient access to the site for all users. Within the site the access road is designed to adoptable standards with pedestrian walkways on both sites and a turning head allowing for safe manoeuvring.

- 6.12 In respect of access to multiple transport modes, bus stops within the village provide a regular service to Spalding where a range of shops and services along with wider transport options are available.
- 6.13 It is therefore concluded that the proposed development is fully compliant with the development plan in respect of Policy SG15 and in all matters relating to safe and convenient access for all users.

Flood Risk

- 6.14 The Flood Risk Assessment prepared by ARP Associates which accompanies this planning application identifies that the majority of the site falls within Flood Zone 1, with a small area in the north-eastern corner falling within Flood Zone 2. Precautionary measures are recommended, including raising finished floor levels to a minimum of 150mm within Flood Zone 1 and 300mm within Flood Zone 2, ground floors to comprise solid concrete slabs or beam and block with screed construction, and incoming electricity supplies to be raised above ground floor level. It is confirmed that these recommendations will be adopted, and noted that they may be secured by the use of planning conditions.

Other Matters

Landscaping

- 6.15 Indicative landscaping is shown on the accompanying proposal drawings, demonstrating that there is ample opportunity to provide an attractive landscaped setting to the proposed development. It is anticipated that a planning condition to secure more detailed landscaping proposals may be attached to any planning permission.

Ecology

- 6.16 A recent ecological survey of the site has been undertaken by Greenlight Environmental Consultancy and their Preliminary Ecological Appraisal accompanies this planning application. The overall finding of the PEA is that habitats on the site are of low/medium ecological value and there are no significant constraints which would prevent the proposed development.

- 6.17 The PEA sets out recommended mitigation and enhancement measures particularly in respect of bats (including 10 no. bat boxes to be installed across the site) and breeding birds, as well as recommendations that construction work is carried out in accordance with the relevant standards for the protection of trees and root protection areas, and recommendations for the soft landscaping scheme. It is confirmed that these measures will be adopted, and they may also be secured by planning conditions.

Archaeology

- 6.18 The Archaeological Evaluation undertaken by Archaeological Project Services which supported the previous outline planning application remains relevant to the current proposals. The report identified that Roman and medieval remains on the site. As a result of these findings conditions requiring a full scheme of archaeological investigation to be undertaken were attached to the outline consent, and it is considered appropriate that such conditions will also be attached to any planning permission for the current proposals.

Foul and Surface Water Drainage

- 6.19 A full scheme of foul and surface water drainage to accommodate the proposed development has been prepared by ARP Associates and accompanies the planning application. It is considered that the proposed design will ensure the effective management of the site in respect of drainage. These works may be secured by planning conditions.

7.0 Planning Balance & Conclusions

- 7.1 This report has provided an assessment of the proposed development of 32 affordable dwellings on land south of Moulton Chapel Road, Cowbit against the relevant policies of the development plan alongside material considerations including the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7.2 Of particular relevance to the determination of the planning application, this assessment has demonstrated that:
- The principle of the proposed development is established, both by virtue of the extant outline planning permission and its accordance with the saved policies of the development plan. Notwithstanding this, due to the absence of a sufficient 5-year-supply of housing sites in the authority at this time, the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged, and it has been shown that there are no adverse impacts which would outweigh the benefits of the proposals;
 - By providing 32 affordable homes with a mix of type and tenure tailored to housing need in the authority area, the development will make a significant contribution to addressing the needs of various groups whilst increasing the overall supply of housing in the local area;
 - The development achieves a high standard of design and will result in a natural extension to the village of Cowbit in an attractive landscaped setting. Within the development, the variety in house-types will help to create establish a neighbourhood character. Overall the scheme demonstrates a good standard of architecture, appropriate layout and effectively landscaping and therefore delivers the aims of national policy in respect of good design;
 - The proposals will preserve the amenity of existing residents, and will provide a good standard of accommodation for future residents; and
 - The proposed development has resolved detailed matters of transport and access, landscaping, flood risk and drainage, as well as addressing the ecological and archaeological constraints of the site, in accordance with the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 7.3 It has been demonstrated that the proposals are in accordance with all policies of the development plan which are relevant to the proposals and which remain up-to-date in the context of the NPPF. The proposals carry the support of national policies as a

material consideration by virtue of achieving a high standard of design and making a meaningful contribution to the supply of housing. The provision of 100% affordable housing on the site at an appropriate density is a material consideration which carries very substantial weight in favour of the proposals.

- 7.4 Applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development, it is clear that there are no adverse impacts which may result from the proposed development which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits.
- 7.5 For these reasons, it is concluded that the proposed development is entirely suitable for the granting of planning permission and in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF it should be approved without delay.