

DECISION DELEGATED TO DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Application No: H18-1048-18 **Applicant:** Mrs Sandra Worts
Proposal: Proposed pair of semi-detached houses
Location: Land East: Bridge Auto'S Bridge Road Sutton Bridge
Terminal Date: 7th January 2019

Planning Policies

Local Plan July 2016:

SG1	General Sustainable Development
SG4	Development in the Countryside
SG14	Design and Layout of New Development
SG17	Protection of Residential Amenity
HS7	New Housing in the Open Countryside including Other Rural Settlements

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2018

Section 5 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
 Section 9 - Promoting sustainable transport
 Section 12 - Achieving well-designed places
 Section 14 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Representations:

	Object	Support	No Obj.	Comments
PARISH COUNCIL	0	0	0	0
WARD MEMBER	0	0	0	1
PLANNING LIAISON OFFICER - FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT	1	0	0	0
HIGHWAYS & SUDS SUPPORT	0	0	0	1
SOUTH HOLLAND INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	0	0	0	1
SHDC INTERNAL	0	0	0	1

OTHER STATUTORY BODIES	0	0	0	1
RESIDENTS	2	0	0	0

CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Proposal

This is a full planning application for a proposed pair of semi-detached houses on land east of Bridge Auto's, Bridge Road, Sutton Bridge.

The dwellings would be 2-bed with modest sized gardens to the rear. Both properties would share an access off Bridge Road.

Site Description

The site is currently the gravelled parking area of an automobile business, which is located immediately to the west. There are a few residential properties on the opposite side of the road and another set of semi-detached dwellings the far side of Bridge Auto's. These dwellings are physically detached from the existing main built-up area of Sutton Bridge.

There is fencing along the northern, eastern and south boundaries. There are also mature trees along the northern boundary, which would be retained.

The site is outside of any defined settlement limit as set out in the South Holland Local Plan (2006) and is therefore classed as being in the countryside in planning policy terms.

Representations

Cllr Brewis - This is considerably beyond the existing or proposed boundary for development, and would it not represent going out into the 'open countryside'?

Sutton Bridge Parish Council - Object on the basis the site is in the open countryside.

Environment Agency - Object. FRA does not state that finished floor levels will be set 1m above ground level in accordance with South East Lincolnshire Flood Risk Standing Advice.

SHDC Environmental Protection - No objection, but requests standard contaminated land condition.

LCC Highways/SUDS - No objection.

Public -

- Would strongly oppose if application involves removing any of the trees for access.

Material Considerations

- Principle
- Flood risk
- Impact upon character and appearance of the area
- Residential amenity

Principle

The site is located outside of any defined settlement limit as set out in the South Holland Local Plan (2006) and is therefore classed as being in the countryside. Sites located in the countryside would

normally be assessed against Policy HS7 in the South Holland Local Plan (2006). This policy only allows residential development in the open countryside where there is an essential need, or small scale rural exception affordable housing that complies with Local Plan Policy HS9. In that context, as the proposal is neither for rural exceptions affordable housing nor essential to meet the needs of agricultural workers, the recommendation would normally be to refuse.

However, the Council does not currently have a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites (4 years as at 31st March 2018). Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2018 (NPPF) states that where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, the most important policies for determining the application (i.e. those relating to the supply of housing) are considered out-of-date. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF is quite clear that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies outlined in the NPPF as a whole; or specific policies in the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted. Sustainable development is defined in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the NPPF as having three dimensions: economic, social and environmental.

The site is not within a protected area or an asset of particular importance as defined by Paragraph 11 of the NPPF.

Economic - The development may support the local economy through employment opportunities associated with construction and future occupants may work locally and support local services.

Social - The proposal would make a contribution, albeit small, towards housing supply in the district (Section 5). Furthermore, there is a reasonable range of shops and facilities available in Sutton Bridge, many of which are within reasonable walking distance (1 mile) from the site via the footpath opposite.

Environmental - Although the site cannot be considered to be isolated (there are five dwellings opposite and an automobile business and another pair of semi-detached dwellings to the west), the site is physically detached from the existing main built-up area of Sutton Bridge. Beyond this are agricultural fields and agricultural units which are a typical feature in the flat fenland landscape. The area has a more rural feel and this is noticeable when you leave Sutton Bridge along Bridge Road in a north-westerly direction. There is a clear sense of physical detachment from the built-up area of Sutton Bridge in terms of how the site relates to existing development. The proposed development, if permitted, would further intensify existing development in this location, which would be contrary to Paragraph 127 of the NPPF which states that planning decisions should ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character, including landscape setting. It would also set a harmful precedent by encouraging further applications of a similar nature along Bridge Road between the site and the main built-up area of Sutton Bridge. It would encourage further ribbon development along this section of road, thereby eroding the open countryside character of this side of Bridge Road. This would cumulatively harm the aims and objectives of both the Framework and emerging SELLP to ensure that new development is sustainable and protects the character and appearance of the area and countryside.

In terms of local planning policy, Policy SG4 of the adopted Local Plan indicates that planning permission will only be granted for development in the open countryside which is essential in the proposed location and cannot reasonably be accommodated within defined settlement limits. Development proposals that would result in an unacceptable impact upon the landscape character of an area, either individually or cumulatively, will only be permitted where the need for it in that location outweighs its impact and no other site or solution exists to accommodate the proposed development. It is not considered that it has been demonstrated that there is an overriding need for the proposed dwelling to be in this location (given the identified impact on the character of the area) and that there are no alternative sites within the built up area of Sutton Bridge which could accommodate it. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy SG4.

Flood risk

The NPPF requires the application of the Sequential Test to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding. If it is not possible for development to be located in zones with a lower risk of flooding (taking into account wider sustainable development objectives), the Exceptions Test can be applied if appropriate.

The South East Lincolnshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (March 2017) provides the basis for

applying the Sequential Test. This concludes that the vast majority of South Holland District is in Flood Zones 2 and 3. Therefore, consistent with wider sustainability objectives, it is not realistically possible to direct all development to zones with a lower risk of flooding. As such, the document outlines a methodology whereby the SFRA hazard and depth maps (in that order) are to be utilised when determining flood risk and applying the sequential test. Using this methodology it is possible to use the information to steer development towards the areas of lower flood risks as advised within paragraph 158 of the NPPF.

The application site lies within Environment Agency Flood Zone 3a and the South East Lincolnshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (March 2017) identifies the worst case scenario for the site as 'danger for most' in terms of flood hazard with predicted flood depths of up to 1.0m. Given that the majority of Sutton Bridge is identified as 'danger for most' and 'danger for all' in terms of flood hazard and would be exposed to flood depths of 1.0m or above in the event of a flood, it is not considered that there are sequentially preferable sites in Sutton Bridge in terms of flood risk. The exception test can therefore be applied.

In order for the Exceptions Test to be passed, it must be demonstrated that the proposed development will provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh flood risk, and that it will be safe for its lifetime, without increasing flood risk elsewhere and where possible reduce flood risk overall.

It is accepted that the development would provide some wider sustainability benefits to the community through its ability to help meet the housing need (albeit a small contribution), and other benefits including generating employment during the construction period. However, the impact that the proposed development would have on the character of the area and the harmful precedent it would set for future development along Bridge Road would considerably outweigh these benefits.

Furthermore, the Environment Agency have objected on the basis that the measures proposed in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment would not be sufficient to mitigate flood risk as it does not recommend that finished floor levels should be raised by 1.0m in accordance with the South East Lincolnshire Flood Risk Standing Advice. The development would therefore not be safe for its lifetime, contrary to Paragraph 160 of the NPPF.

Given the above, it is considered reasonable to conclude that the Exceptions Test cannot be passed in this instance.

Impact upon the character and appearance of the area

As stated above, the proposed development would further intensify an existing cluster of development in a countryside location where there is a clear physical separation between these properties and the main built-up area of Sutton Bridge. This would have an adverse impact on the character of the area and would set a harmful precedent for further development along Bridge Road in a ribbon form between the site and the main built-up area of Sutton Bridge. This would have a cumulative material adverse impact by eroding the countryside character of this side of Bridge Road. It would therefore be contrary to Policies SG1 and SG14 of the Local Plan which seek, amongst other things, to ensure that new development does not have an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the locality.

Residential amenity

Due to the positioning of the proposed dwellings in relation to existing development, there should be no issues of overlooking, loss of light or them being overbearing in nature.

The proposal would therefore not conflict with Policy SG17 of the Local Plan which seeks to protect residential amenity.

Other

A member of the public has raised concerns about the potential loss of trees in order to create an access to the site. However, none of the trees along the frontage of the site are protected. Furthermore, it is not completely clear whose responsibility the trees are - They are on the grass verge so may actually fall under the remit of LCC Highways.

Conclusion

Taking into account the above, the site is not considered to be a suitable site for housing with particular regards to the principles of sustainable development and the protection of the countryside character of the area. It is therefore contrary to Policies SG1, SG4 and SG14 of the South Holland Local Plan 2006 and Paragraphs 7, 8, 127 and 160 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2018.

The recommendation is therefore for a delegated refusal.