

Item No. 8

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/15/04226/OUT
LOCATION	Land between Astwick Road & Taylors Road, Stotfold
PROPOSAL	Outline Application: Development of 0.84 hectares to provide bungalows and additional residential accommodation and other associated works
PARISH	Stotfold
WARD	Stotfold & Langford
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Dixon, Saunders & Saunders
CASE OFFICER	Alex Harrison
DATE REGISTERED	06 November 2015
EXPIRY DATE	05 February 2016
APPLICANT	Larkwood Design Limited
AGENT	hd planning
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Called in by Cllr Brian Saunders <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outside of settlement envelope• Through road creates a roundabout effect.• Land is open field and will impact on landscape towards Astwick• Area not suitable for elderly accommodation.
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Outline Application - Approval recommended

Reason for Recommendation

The proposal for residential development is contrary to Policy DM4 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2009, however the application site is adjacent to the existing settlement boundary of Stotfold which is considered to be a sustainable location. The proposal would have an impact on the character and appearance of the area and would result in the loss of agricultural land however this impact is not considered to be demonstrably harmful. The proposal is also considered to be acceptable in terms of highway safety and neighbouring amenity and therefore accords with Policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document (2009) and the Council's adopted Design Guidance (2014). The proposal would provide policy compliant affordable housing and the whole scheme would contribute to the Council's 5 year housing supply as a deliverable site within the period. Financial contributions to offset local infrastructure impacts would be sought for education. These benefits are considered to add weight in favour of the development and therefore the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

Site Location:

The application site forms a triangular parcel of arable land located at the northern extent of Stotfold. The site lies outside of the settlement envelope for the town but adjacent its limits. It is regarded as an open countryside site. The site sits adjacent

to both Astwick and Taylors Road and abuts a small grouping of dwellings to the south. The northern side of the site sits adjacent arable farmland.

To the east of the site sits the recent redevelopment scheme known as Aspen Gardens and a number of dwellings front Taylors Road and look onto the site. To the west is a mixture of residential properties and an employment area.

The Application:

Outline planning permission is sought to develop the site for residential use. All matters are reserved aside from access. Two access points are proposed, one from Astwick Road and the other from Taylors Road and both are proposed as priority junction arrangements. No specific number of residential units has been proposed. However the application forms have stated there are 26 units proposed in total and the transport assessment submitted has assessed the impacts of a scheme for 35 units. The consideration of this application has been done on the basis of a maximum of 26 dwellings.

The application was accompanied with an indicative block plan which provides no layout detail per se but illustrates a mix of housing types including bungalows, chalet bungalows and two storey dwellings.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies - North 2009

CS1 Development Strategy

CS5 Providing Homes

DM1 Renewable Energy

DM2 Sustainable Construction of New Buildings

DM10 Housing Mix

DM4 Development Within & Beyond the Settlement Envelopes

CS14 High Quality Development

DM3 High Quality Development

CS7 Affordable Housing

CS2 Developer Contributions

Development Strategy

At the meeting of Full Council on 19 November 2015 it was resolved to withdraw the Development Strategy. Preparation of the Central Bedfordshire Local Plan has begun. A substantial volume of evidence gathered over a number of years will help support this document. These technical papers are consistent with the spirit of the NPPF and therefore will remain on our website as material considerations which may inform further development management decisions.

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Other Documents

Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (March 2014)

Relevant Planning History:

None

Consultees:

Stotfold Town Council

We understand Central Bedfordshire Council has now fulfilled its 5 year land goal and therefore this parcel of land falls outside the development envelope, and for this reason the application should fail.

The parcel of land is designated by ALC as grade 2, described as very good agricultural land. The extract below is from NPPF (2012):-

11. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

109. The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils

112. Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.

On this basis we feel the application should fail in favour of less well graded agricultural land

The application suggests a strong bias towards providing accommodation for the elderly, however, the developer has no control over who purchases property, thus no provision can be guaranteed for elderly residents of Stotfold wishing to downsize.

If it is intended to provide accommodation for the elderly, the siting is wholly inappropriate. The plot is set between two works with many HGV movements. If the design is adopted the through road will create an effective "roundabout" that could be used by HGV's to turn around, not conducive to quiet accommodation with safe pedestrian access. Further, although only one personal injury RTC is reported in a 5 year period the amount of damage done to footways and bollards protecting pedestrians, by HGV's, in the area is high. Regrettably these incidents are not reported to the police.

The application makes mention of sustainability however,

the following inaccuracies are noted:

- Public Transport – there are no buses serving The Green on Sundays, as suggested in the application thus isolating elderly residents every week.
- Access to Arlesey Station by bus only occurs in the rush hours, to travel there during the bulk of the day requires the use of a car.
- There is a totally inadequate (non-existent) bus service to either Bedford hospital or Lister Hospital, again of vital importance for accommodation aimed at the elderly.
- The application suggests “close proximity to two bus stops allowing convenient access to the town centre, Hitchin, Stevenage and other nearby settlements.” Convenient is defined as “fitting in well with a person's needs, activities, and plans; involving little trouble or effort; situated so as to allow easy access to” - clearly the report writer has not used the sparse bus services available which are in no way convenient.

In respect of the two storey properties that may attract families, the application mentions lower school availability, however, Stotfold has a continuing shortage of lower school places, even after the expansion of both lower schools. Recent other developments have created problems for parents wishing to send children to local schools and places being offered out of area. This application can only exacerbate the problem.

We are concerned to see that water run-off and foul water discharge are not to be offered for adoption and to be maintained by the developer/residents. With such proximity to agricultural land the possibility of contamination must be considered a hazard.

Highways

Despite the relatively small nature of the development this application is supported by a Transport Statement based on a theoretical development of 25 dwellings. Not surprisingly the TS suggests that there should not be any highway grounds to oppose the scheme. I can confirm that that is indeed the case although I do have concerns with respect to the suggestion that the site could be accessed from both Taylors Road and Astwick Road especially with the prospect of an adoptable carriageway forming a link between the two. Nevertheless there is no objection to the principle of the access arrangements in either or both locations.

I note that the accesses are shown to be just outside the

20mph zone and whilst this is acceptable it may be prudent to extend the lower limit to beyond the access points. In this respect I have suggested in my conditions that the reserved matters application should make provision for a traffic regulation Order to extend the speed limit.

Sustainable
Drainage

Urban We have concerns over the use of soakaways and shallow infiltration components at this location. While the superficial deposits of sand and gravel have indicated good soakage rates, the layer of clay at 1.25m below ground level effectively prevents water from draining any further. Ground water levels may therefore be close to the surface which has the potential to reduce the capacity of any soakaways constructed onsite. This should be investigated further through site specific ground investigations to determine the infiltration capacity of the underlying geology and the ground water level. Any adverse effects likely to occur as a result of water soaking into the ground should also be fully evaluated before determining the extent to which infiltration can be used on a site.

In the event that infiltration tests show that infiltration is not possible, or the proposed surface water mitigation cannot be delivered in accordance with the outline proposal (see Stotfold SUDS Statement, 2015), alternative proposals for discharge should be provided so demonstrate the site can still be effectively drained.

There must be sufficient space onsite to attenuate the surface water prior to infiltration/discharge, we therefore do not accept the report findings that swales, infiltration basins and other SUDS devices are unsuitable due to constraints associated with small sites and limited land availability (see Table 3: Site-Specific Sustainable Drainage Techniques, Stotfold SUDS Statement, 2015). These components should be utilised to convey run off between different stages of a SuDS Management Train to reduce flow rates, runoff volumes and pollution in a sequential manner. This is in keeping with the SuDS Local Requirements set out in the Central Bedfordshire Sustainable Drainage Guidance (Adopted April 2014, Updated May 2015).

We strongly encourage that the use of SuDS be appraised in the public open spaces and amenity areas of the site, to provide additional temporary storage treatment and biodiversity gains.

Also, given the high density of the proposed development (0.84ha, 110 residential homes), we will require that

compliance with The Building Regulations is demonstrated; *“Infiltration devices should not be built within 5m of a building or road or in areas of unstable land”*.

We also have concerns regarding the long term operation of the proposed surface water drainage system. We note that it will be the responsibility of the residents to manage the permeable paving on private driveways and individual rainwater harvesting systems or rain gardens. Given that the maintenance of these components will be crucial to the overall performance of the system, we require that ownership and maintenance responsibilities of private owners are made clear and that this is passed to any future occupier in a clear and concise way (i.e. through the title deeds of any property). To mitigate future maintenance issues, careful landscaping and design of areas adjacent to components should be provided to ensure permeability will not be reduced. Competent construction and correct installation of all surface water drainage systems should be ensured.

We appreciate that as the application is outline a fixed scheme has not been confirmed at this stage, and the information in the submitted report will be used to inform the detailed drainage design at a reserved matters stage. We therefore require details of the following to be demonstrated and confirmed with the final detailed design.

- Confirmed total area of hardstanding and proposed layout, with revised run off calculations, and a clearly labelled plan indicating the location of individual surface water drainage components, attenuation volumes and flow controls.
- Further investigation into the possibility of surface water sewers or land drains in the vicinity which would allow an attenuation strategy to be utilised, in correspondence with the IDB.
- Further ground investigation, to determine whether clay identified in the infiltration test was a small pocket of clay, a final infiltration rate and ground water levels. To be carried out by a suitable qualified engineer in accordance with BRE 365. In support of this, a completed CIRIA Paper RP992/19 Infiltration Assessment should be provided.
- That pathways for contaminants will not be created through the proposed drainage measures for the proposed development and mitigation of this is provided, in correspondence with the EA. This is critical where permeable paving is designed to

accept the overflow from the roof areas in extreme rainfall events.

- Details of the structural and hydraulic design and performance to be provided of the entire surface water drainage system. Where permeable paving is proposed it will be designed by a suitably competent engineer after a thorough investigation of the site and assessment of the needs of the proposed development, in accordance with industry best practise including BS 7533:3 (2005 ed.), CIRIA's Suds Manual, and Interpave's guide to Permeable Pavements.
- Details of the finalised maintenance and management arrangements for the surface water drainage system to ensure it will continue to function as designed for the lifetime of the development.
- Details of landscaping and design of areas adjacent to surface water drainage and SuDS components.
- Details of any blockage mitigation in the system and proposed management for exceedance flows in the event of system failure or extreme rainfall. This also applies to overflow management of infiltration systems.
- Compliance with national and local legislation relating to surface water management, including the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (March 2015) and Central Bedfordshire Sustainable Drainage Guidance (Adopted April 2014, Updated May 2015).

Internal Drainage Board The applicant has stated in the accompanying Sustainable Drainage Statement their preferred method of surface are drainage is by infiltration/soakaways. Tests carried out to date by the applicant have shown this method may not be suitable.

If the method of storm water disposal is to be by way of soakaways then it is essential that the ground conditions be investigated and if found satisfactory the soakaways constructed in accordance with the latest BRE Digest 365.

If infiltration/soakaway is found to be unsuitable any discharge to the nearby watercourse will require the Board's consent.

The Board therefore suggests that planning permission should not be granted without conditions requiring that the applicant's storm water design and construction

Trees and Landscape Ecology

proposals are adequate before any development commences.

I have read through the Habitat Survey and note that no further surveys are recommended, should development not proceed within 2 years of this survey updated information would be required. The site is predominantly arable with some lengths of hedgerow. Ecological receptors were noted to be birds and potentially amphibians. An annual toad lift takes place on Taylors Road each year so it is likely that toads would be using the hedgerows for cover and connectivity to their breeding pond.

The NPPF calls for development to deliver a net gain for biodiversity and opportunities for enhancement should be considered. The indicative scheme is limited in detail but consideration should be given to maximising ecological benefits. Positioning of SUDS should consider multi functionality and ensure habitat enhancement for amphibians.

The inclusion of integrated bird and bat bricks within the fabric of buildings on the external edges of the development. Existing boundary features should be retained within the public realm to ensure their appropriate management. Often features which become consumed within the curtilage of a dwelling are at risk of being lost. Nectar and berry rich wildlife areas/amenity grassland would achieve biodiversity gains.

Landscape Officer

I am very concerned about the visual impact this development will have on the surrounding rural landscape. At present the Indicative layout does not show sufficient space allocated for either internal landscape, SUDs or boundary screening. I am also very concerned that the indicative planting suggests the potential of the access being extended into a further development.

The site lies within LCA 4C - the Upper Ivel Clay Valley. This landscape is vulnerable to increasing urbanisation - the level topography of the river valley means that even domestic scale buildings can impact on the sensitive river corridor. Two of the key positive landscape features include sense of place, landscape and nature conservation value of the river valley and the setting of Astwick, with its surrounding pattern of small fields and distinctive historic character.

I do not object to this development, but consider it falls short of the design quality required to meet the Policy objectives within Dm Policy 14- this particularly mentions the need to seek landscape enhancement in the Ivel Valley.

The guidelines for new development for LCA 4C include

- 4C.1.19 - safeguard the rural character and qualities of the Ivel corridor..
- 4C.1.20 - create further connections between the villages and floodplain eg through tree planting or wetland habitat creation.
- 4C.1.22 - enhance landscape boundaries at exposed urban edges.
- 4C.1.25 - safeguard the distinctive character of Astwick, with its historic pattern of small fields.

I would like a revised scheme with an appropriate scale of mitigation which would help to integrate this development and provide screening as this is an open landscape, with only the roadside hedge of value in this respect. Structural planting to the north and east would help to safeguard the important views from the riverside and the Mill. The roadside hedge might be described as "species poor" but it is a valuable feature for both landscape and wildlife; it would be important that this hedge is maintained as a rural feature and maintained to a height of at least 1.5m.

A full Landscape Plan would be required.

Sustainable Growth

Policy DM1 requires all new development of more than 10 dwellings to meet 10% energy demand from renewable or low carbon sources. The proposed development is above the policy threshold and therefore all dwellings should have 10% of their energy demand sources from renewable or low carbon sources.

Policy DM2 requires all new residential development to meet CfSH Level 3. The energy standard of the CfSH Level 3 is below standard required by the current Building Regulations. All new development should therefore as minimum comply with the 2013 Part L of the Building Regulations and deliver 10% of their energy demand from renewable sources.

I would encourage the developer to achieve a high energy efficiency standard first (possibly going beyond the standard prescribed by the Building Regulations) as energy efficient fabric leads to lower energy demand and smaller renewable energy installation to satisfy the policy requirement. High energy efficiency will ensure that energy demand and carbon emissions are low throughout the life time of dwellings and not just dependant on renewable energy installation.

Energy demand can also be lowered by application of Passivhaus design principles. Dwellings should be orientated to maximise solar passive gain and avoid

summer overheating. Excessive solar gain can be minimised through installation of shading measures such as brise soleil, overlarge eaves and canopies or solar control glazing.

Shading can also be achieved by planting of appropriate deciduous trees which would provide shade in summer and allow light and heat to penetrate dwellings in the winter months when heat gain is beneficial. Tree planting must be taken into consideration at the initial planning stage of the development to ensure that the spreading roots and canopy with not cause damage to the properties and underground services when the tree reaches maturity. I would advice a consultation with a tree officer to select the most appropriate tree species.

Solar gains can lead to overheating in summer months and therefore risk of overheating should be assessed. Risk of overheating should be assessed using projected temperatures over next 30 years rather than last 30 years to ensure dwellings resilience to future changes in temperatures.

In terms of water efficiency, the development should achieve 110 litres per person per day (105 litres for internal water usage and 5 litres for external water usage, equivalent to the CFSH Level 3 standard). This standard can be met through installation of water efficient fittings such as low flow taps and dual flush toilets. I would also encourage the applicant to fit houses with garden water butts.

The development should be designed with climate change in mind taking account of increase in rainfall and temperature. The development should therefore minimise hard standing surfaces and increase green, natural areas to allow rainwater infiltration and minimise heat island effect through evaporation and tree shading. Light colour building and landscaping materials should be prioritised over dark coloured which absorb more sun light and retain heat increasing urban heat island effect.

I would like a Sustainability Statement to be submitted with the detailed planning application that covers:

- Energy efficiency,
- Renewable energy contribution,
- Water efficiency,
- Climate change adaptation including overheating and ventilation in dwellings.

To ensure that the requirements of policies DM1 and DM2 are met, I request the following planning condition to

be attached, should the planning permission be granted:

- 10% energy demand of the development to be delivered from renewable or low carbon sources;
- All dwellings to achieve water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day.

Housing Officer Development I support this application as it provides for 9 affordable homes which reflects the current affordable housing policy requirement of 35%. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) indicates a required tenure split for sites meeting the affordable threshold as being 63% affordable rent and 37% intermediate tenure. The scheme proposes 6 affordable rent units and 3 intermediate tenure units (shared ownership) which complies with the requirement from the SHMA. The supporting documentation indicates some 4 bed units within the affordable element. Internal waiting list information indicates a small requirement of 4 bed units for affordable rent in and around the Stotfold area. I would like to see at least one 4 bed property for affordable rent.

I would like to see the units well dispersed throughout the site and integrated with the market housing to promote community cohesion & tenure blindness. We expect the affordable housing to be let in accordance with the Council's allocation scheme and enforced through an agreed nominations agreement with the Council. I would also expect all units to meet all HCA Design and Quality Standards.

MANOP Team The proposed development falls within the Ivel Valley locality and the Stotfold and Langford ward. Ivel Valley has a total population of 84,900 and 5,800 of these residents are aged over 75 years. This is forecast to rise to 10,180 by 2030.

Delivering accommodation suitable for older people is therefore a priority for Central Bedfordshire Council.

In 2013 the Stotfold and Langford ward had 13,900 and 16% of its population was over 65 years old. For the same area 10.3% of households consist of one person of 65 years of age and over and 8.9% of households have all occupants aged 65 and over. In 2011 13.8% of the population in this ward were retired, which is similar to the average for Central Bedfordshire (13.5%) and England (13.7%)³.

The number of older residents in this ward and the

substantial predicted rise in the people over 65 in the Ivel Valley area demonstrates that there is likely to be significant demand for mainstream housing that is specifically designed for older people and for specialist accommodation for older people, such as residential care homes and housing with care and support available such as extra care developments.

If older people live in accommodation that does not meet their needs it can have an adverse impact on their health and well-being. In 2011 in the ward of Stotfold and Langford 4.6% of residents stated that their day to day activities were limited a lot due to a long term health condition or disability and 8.0% of residents were limited a little. This highlights the need to have more accommodation available for older people that enables them to live independently within the community.

The proposed development is not an appropriate location or size to accommodate specialist accommodation for older people. However, it would be beneficial that a reasonable proportion of the dwellings proposed were designed to be suitable for older people, taking into account their needs, expectations and aspirations. We note that the proposal is for largely bungalow accommodation and therefore welcome it from that perspective.

Design and layout

With good design, mainstream housing can be suitable for older people at little or no additional cost to the developer. Indeed where housing is designed to be specifically for older people it may be acceptable to have reduced provision in some aspects such as outdoor amenity space.

The following design characteristics are based on national research and local practitioners' views and are what older residents look for in a new home:

- The ability to live on the ground floor and avoid the use of stairs. If stairs are unavoidable then residents need provision for a future stair lift or space for a platform lift.
- Smaller homes that are easy to manage, with a minimum of two bedrooms and outdoor amenity space that is accessible but small and easy to maintain.
- En-suite bathrooms and/or an easy route from the main bedroom to the bathroom.
- Level access throughout the ground floor.
- Layout, width of doors and corridors to allow for wheelchair access and turning circles in living

rooms.

- Walls able to take adaptations such as grab rails.
- Sockets, controls etc. at a convenient height.
- Low window sills to maximise natural light levels and so that people in bed or a wheelchair can see out.
- Sufficient sized parking space with the distance to the parking space kept to a minimum.
- Bathrooms to include easy access shower facilities.
- Level or gently sloping approach to the home and an accessible threshold.
- Energy efficient and economical heating system to help to keep energy costs as low as possible.

Summary

Our view is that the needs of older people should be considered as part of this proposal and, should approval be given, we would strongly support a significant proportion of houses in the scheme to be suitable for older people. Whilst the proposal for a significant proportion of bungalows is welcomed we would further request that these dwellings be made as attractive as possible to older people by incorporating some or all of the design features mentioned above.

Other Representations:

Neighbours

26 letters have been received raising the following planning objections and comments:

- Site is greenfield and not brownfield
- Increase traffic which could cause accidents
- There are not enough school places and the doctors is oversubscribed. Stotfold lacks the amenities for the development.
- Two storey buildings on a site adjacent to bungalows is incompatible with the existing developed area.
- Results in a connecting route through the site resulting in increased traffic which is not desirable for a residential development.
- There are already sites in Stotfold identified for housing and these should be prioritised.
- Loss of prime agricultural land.
- Site has been a habitat for common toads.
- Development will exacerbate flooding in the area and sewerage systems struggle to cope.
- Noise disturbance to proposed homes through activities at the adjacent industrial areas.
- Poor location for elderly accommodation.

- Loss of privacy to 51 Astwick Road

Determining Issues:

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Principle
2. Affect on the Character and Appearance of the Area
3. Neighbouring Amenity
4. Highway Considerations
5. Other Considerations
6. Sustainable Development and the Planning Balance.

Considerations

1. Principle of Development

- 1.1 The site lies outside of the settlement envelope of Stotfold and is therefore located in land regarded as open countryside. The adopted policies within the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009 limit new housing development on unallocated sites to within settlement envelopes (Policy DM4). Stotfold is designated as a minor service centre where Policy DM4 allows for new residential development within the settlement envelope only. On the basis of Policy DM4 a residential proposal outside of the settlement envelope would be regarded as contrary to policy. However it is necessary for the Council to consider whether material considerations outweigh the non-compliance with Policy.
- 1.2 On 19/02/2016 an appeal was dismissed at a site in Henlow for a residential development adjacent the settlement envelope. While the decision was to dismiss the appeal, in making her decision, the Inspector concluded that that the Council had “not demonstrated a five year supply of deliverable housing sites” and discounted a number of sites from the supply. Therefore the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing and in these circumstances the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 49 applies which states that the Council's Housing Policies are not up to date. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states, among other things, that where the development plan policies are out-of-date, the Council should grant planning permission unless 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.
- 1.3 The site is adjacent to the Stotfold Settlement Envelope. The southern boundary of the site directly adjoins existing residential development. The limits of the application site where they sit adjacent to a highway are also noted to have a direct relationship with the built form of the settlement on the other side of that road. There are prominent dwellings on the eastern side of the site and a mixture of buildings and uses to the west. The proposal will see the encroachment of built form into the open countryside but its relationship with the existing settlement is noted and it is not regarded as an isolated site.
- 1.4 Stotfold is a minor service centre which has a number of services including a post office and convenience store, public house, lower school, village hall, playing fields, doctor's surgery and a church. The settlement is served by a bus service with a number of stops. On the basis of these Stotfold is considered to

be a sustainable location.

1.5 Affordable Housing

The proposal would provide 35 % Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy CS7. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in this respect. It is expected that the affordable housing mix would be policy compliant. The applicant has also stated that the bungalow accommodation proposed could cater for the elderly population and could have the benefit of an onsite warden and shared facilities. Having sought clarity on this aspect of the scheme the applicant has advised this is an option for detailed design and would be dependent on scheme viability. It is therefore given little weight in terms of considering the benefits of the scheme.

- 1.6 In terms of the principle of development significant weight is given to the Council's housing land supply position. On this basis residential development in this location is considered to be acceptable in principle. It is necessary for the scheme to be regarded as sustainable development in the eyes of the NPPF which will be discussed further in this report.

2. Affect on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 2.1 The development of the site would encroach into the open countryside. Currently the site is as an arable parcel with hedgerow boundaries adjacent to the highways. The southern boundary abuts a small grouping of dwellings but in the main the site is open and contributes to the setting of the settlement when viewed and arriving from the north. Its development will result in an impact and material change to the character of the area. However consideration is given to the recent development east of the site which has seen new residential properties erected which has also affected the character of the area, increasing the extent of built form. The existing extent of built form on both Astwick Road and Taylors Road are such that the limits of this application site will not sit as an isolated or contrived expansion of the settlement. It is therefore considered that the impact on the character of the area, in principle, will not be substantial to the extent that permission should be refused.
- 2.2 The impact on the character and appearance of the area can be mitigated against through the high quality detailed design. The indicative block plan submitted shows two storey dwellings adjacent the northern boundary however this would not be acceptable and is given little weight in considering the application. In this location it will be necessary to create an appropriate transition from the open countryside to the settlement and this would be achieved by lower scaled built form at the northern extent of the site. The scheme proposes bungalows as part of its housing mix and it is considered that these should be sited to create this transition which would limit the extent of built form at the entrance to the settlement. This is a matter that would be addressed through a detailed design reserved matters proposal.
- 2.3 Landscape proposals will also contribute to addressing the impact and a reserved matters proposal is expected to use robust structural landscaping at the northern boundary to soften the impact. It is expected that some if not the majority of the existing hedgerows fronting the highways would be removed in order to create a development frontage. The loss would be compensated through the provision of new landscaping as part of the detailed scheme.

2.4 On the basis of the considerations above, it is considered that detailed design proposals, through reserved matters, would be able to achieve a scheme that does not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area.

3. Neighbouring Amenity

3.1 Detailed design matters are reserved and therefore a definitive assessment of the merits of the application and impact on neighbours cannot be made. The relationship of the site to the existing settlement is such that a designed scheme will need to take account of a possible impact on the dwellings south of the site served by both Astwick and Taylors Road. This is considered to be an issue that can be addressed through detailed design and boundary landscaping.

3.2 The other nearest dwellings are on the other side of the adjacent roads and it is not considered that there are suitable distances between these residential properties and the application site.

3.3 Concern was raised over an impact of noise from the neighbouring industrial areas meaning the suitable levels of amenity could not be achieved for proposed residents. The concern is acknowledged however it is noted that the industrial areas already coexist with residential properties. As a result there is no objection in principle on this ground however a condition will be included requiring the applicant demonstrate how noise impacts will be addressed.

3.4 At reserved matters stage, any detailed scheme would be expected to be designed in accordance with the Council's adopted Design Guide including the recommendations that seek to ensure suitable amenity levels are provided. Therefore it is considered that a suitable level of amenity can be provided for new residents.

4. Highway Considerations

4.1 The site is proposed to be accessed at two points, one from Taylors Road and one from Astwick Road. Both arrangements are to be priority junctions and no objection has been raised by the Highways Officer to this layout. Likewise there is no objection in terms of the capacity of the existing road network to accommodate the increased traffic levels that would result from this scheme. Concerns are raised that the double access would create a rat run style through road and this is acknowledged. No layout is proposed and it is therefore a presumption at this stage. A through route would not be desirable and it is considered that a detailed design scheme will require a layout that discourages this which could include solutions such as traffic calming features within the development.

4.2 No indicative layout is provided to ascertain the possible parking layouts and levels for the scheme. It is expected that any detailed reserved matters application would propose Design Guide compliant parking both in terms of residents and visitor provision. Visitor parking will be required and a scheme for 26 dwellings will require 7 visitor spaces.

4.3 The block plan is illustrated to show that footway extensions will be provided at the access points. The footways appear to be within the public highway and the

applicant will be required to provide them in the interests of integration of the development to the settlement. The provision of the footpaths can be secured through the S106 agreement and the scheme is considered to be acceptable in this respect. Furthermore, increasing the built form along Astwick Road will necessitate the relocation of the existing 30mph signs further along the road. This can also be secured through the S106 agreement.

5. Other Considerations

5.1 S106 agreement matters

Spending Officers were consulted and comments returned with financial contributions requested from Education. The following items would form the initial heads of terms for an agreement, on which discussions would be based if Members of the committee resolve to grant consent.

Education:

Financial contributions will be sought for the following projects:

- Early Years Contribution – £18,665.64
- Lower School Contribution – £62,218.80
- Middle School Contribution – £62,607.17
- Upper School Contribution – £76,772.97

Highway

Financial contributions will be sought to fund a Traffic Regulation Order to carry out works to footway extensions from the proposed accesses. The contributions would also cover an Order to relocate the 30mph speed limit signs to accommodate the access.

Timetable for delivery

In order to demonstrate that the development will contribute houses towards the Council's 5 year land supply the agreement will include a clause requiring the applicant/developer to submit a timetable for the delivery of the houses which will be agreed with the Council.

5.2 Agricultural land

Objections have been received on the grounds of loss of agricultural land. This is an acknowledged impact and the NPPF advises that development should be directed to the areas of poorer land. The loss of land is an impact of the development and forms part of the considerations into the planning balance. In this instance there is a clear need for housing land and the benefit of housing development should be given significant weight. It is considered that the benefit of the housing outweighs the impact of the loss of this agricultural land in this instance.

5.3 Ecology.

Objection was raised on the grounds that the Ecological survey did not identify the presence of Common Toads at the site. The assessment was considered by the Council's ecologist who has raised no objections in this respect and has commented that a good SuDs proposal could be an enhancement for amphibians. There is no reason to believe that there is an omission from the assessment and on the basis of the information submitted, no objection is raised.

5.4 Human Rights issues

Based on the information submitted there are no known issues raised in the context of Human Rights/equalities Act 2010 and as such there would be no relevant implications with this proposal.

6. Sustainable Development and the Planning Balance.

6.1 The application has been submitted with the argument that the Council is unable to demonstrate a deliverable 5 year supply of housing land. Therefore the scheme is proposed to meet an assumed housing need in the area. However, at the time of writing the Council considers that it is able to demonstrate such a supply. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF, for decision-making this means:

- *approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay; and*
- *where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
- *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; or*
- *specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted*

As such the development must accord with the development plan to be approved. In this case it is considered the development is contrary to policy DM4 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies and this policy is up to date as the Council considers that it has a deliverable 5 year supply of housing land.

6.2 However, consideration should still be given to the individual merits of the scheme in light of said presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF sets out the three dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental. The scheme should therefore be considered in light of these.

6.3 Environmental

The encroachment of built development beyond the settlement envelope results in a loss of open countryside which is a negative impact of the proposal. It abuts residential development and has a visual relationship with existing development to the east and west of the site. This demonstrates that the site is not isolated. The site does not fall under any landscape designation that would infer its protection and is not considered to be a valued landscape although it is acknowledged that it contributes to the entrance setting to Stotfold when arriving from the north. The impact of developing adjacent the settlement envelope is not considered to result in significant and demonstrable harm.

6.4 Social

The provision of housing is a benefit to the scheme which should be given significant weight. As should the provision of affordable housing which is policy compliant in this application. The report has confirmed that Stotfold is regarded as a sustainable location and it is considered that the settlement offers the services and facilities that can accommodate the growth resultant from this

scheme.

There the development will impact on local infrastructure, the applicant will be required, to offset these impacts by entering into a S106 agreement to provide financial contributions for education, footway provision at the site and monies to extend the settlement speed limit.

6.5 Economic

The economic benefits of construction employment are noted. There s a small economic impact resulting from the loss of agricultural land however this is not considered to outweigh the benefit of housing provision. As mentioned above financial contributions will be secured for education projects at schools in the catchment area of the site to help accommodate the level of growth anticipated from this scheme which is considered to be a benefit.

- 6.6 In this case, the additional housing and the provision of the affordable housing units would be a benefit by adding to the 5 year supply which should be given significant weight and this is considered to outweigh the impacts from the development. In light of the comments made above it is considered even though the development is contrary to policy DM4 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009 the individual merits of this scheme and obligations to be secured through S106 agreement are such that the proposal can be regarded as sustainable development in the eyes of the NPPF and, in accordance with a presumption in favour, should be supported.

Recommendation:

That Planning Permission be granted subject to the completion of a S106 agreement and the following:

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS / REASONS

- 1 Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 Details of the access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping, including boundary treatments (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before any development begins and the development shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: To comply with Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended).

- 3 The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.

Reason: To comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 4 **No development shall take place until an Environmental Construction Management Plan detailing access arrangements for construction vehicles, on-site parking, loading and unloading areas, materials storage areas and wheel cleaning arrangements shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The construction of the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Environmental Construction Management Plan.**

Reason: In the interest of highway safety, to ensure a satisfactory standard of construction and layout for the development and to comply with Policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 5 Any application for reserved matters shall include details of the existing and final ground, ridge and slab levels of the buildings. The details shall include sections through both the site and the adjoining properties and the proposal shall be developed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that an acceptable relationship results between the new development and adjacent buildings and public areas in accordance with policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009).

- 6 **No development shall take place until details of hard and soft landscaping (including details of boundary treatments and public amenity open space, Local Equipped Areas of Play and Local Areas of Play) together with a timetable for its implementation have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out as approved and in accordance with the approved timetable.**

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development would be acceptable in accordance with Policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009

- 7 **No development shall take place shall take place until a Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan for a period of ten years from the date of its delivery in accordance with Condition 7 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the management body, who will be responsible for delivering the approved landscape maintenance and**

management plan. The landscaping shall be maintained and managed in accordance with the approved plan following its delivery in accordance with Condition 7.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the site would be acceptable in accordance with Policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009

- 8 No development shall take place until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on the agreed Sustainable Drainage Statement (September 2015), sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro geological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage strategy should demonstrate the surface water run-off generated up to and including the 100 years critical storm will not exceed the run-off from the undeveloped site following the corresponding rainfall event. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved detailed design before the development is completed and shall be managed and maintained thereafter in accordance with the agreed management and maintenance plan.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding both on and off site, to improve and protect water quality, and improve habitat and amenity in accordance with Policy 49 of Development Strategy for Central Bedfordshire Revise Pre-Submission Version June 2014.

- 9 **No development shall take place until a foul water strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Unless otherwise agreed in writing the works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any dwelling subsequently approved.**

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, to improve and protect water quality, and improve habitat and amenity in accordance with policy DM2 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 10 **No development shall take place until details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority showing how renewable and low energy sources would generate 10% of the energy needs of the development and also showing water efficiency measures achieving 110 litres per person per day. The works shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: In the interests of sustainability.

- 11 Any subsequent reserved matters application shall include the following;

- Estate roads designed and constructed to a standard appropriate for adoption as public highway.
- Pedestrian and cycle linkages to existing routes

- Vehicle parking and garaging in accordance with the councils standards applicable at the time of submission.
- Cycle parking and storage in accordance with the Councils standards applicable at the time of submission.
- A Construction Traffic Management Plan detailing access arrangements for construction vehicles, routing of construction vehicles, on-site parking and loading and unloading areas.
- Materials Storage Areas.
- Wheel cleaning arrangements.
- A Residential Travel Plan.

Reason: To ensure that the development of the site is completed to provide adequate and appropriate highway arrangements at all times.

- 12 **No development shall take place until full engineering details of the access arrangements shown for indicative purposes on the submitted plans have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and no dwelling approved under any subsequent reserved matters application shall be brought into use until such time as the agreed works, including the provision of 2.4m x43m visibility splays, clear of all obstructions, have been implemented.**

Reason: To ensure the provision of appropriate access arrangements and associated off-site highway works in the interests of highway safety.

- 13 No development relating to the construction of the dwellings pursuant to this permission shall take place until details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority of a scheme of noise mitigation the demonstrates how acceptable amenity levels will be achieved for new residents in light of neighbouring industrial uses in Stotfold. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and shall be in place prior to the occupation of the dwelling to which each works relate.

Reason: To ensure suitable levels of amenity are provided for residents in accordance with policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2009.

- 14 **No development shall take place unless and until the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:**
- A Phase 1 Desk Study incorporating a site walkover, site history, maps and all further features of industry best practice relating to potential contamination.**
 - Where shown to be necessary by the Phase 1 Desk Study, a Phase 2 Site Investigation report further documenting the ground conditions of the site with regard to potential contamination, incorporating appropriate soils and gas sampling.**
 - Where shown to be necessary by the Phase 2 Desk Study, a Phase 3 detailed scheme for remedial works and measures to be taken to**

mitigate any risks to human health, groundwater and the wider environment.

Any works which form part of the Phase 3 scheme approved by the local authority shall be completed in full before the use hereby permitted commences. The effectiveness of any scheme shall be demonstrated to the Local Planning Authority by means of a validation report (to incorporate photographs, material transport tickets and validation sampling), unless an alternative period is approved in writing by the Authority. Any such validation should include responses to any unexpected contamination discovered during works.

The British Standard for Topsoil, BS 3882:2007, specifies requirements for topsoils that are moved or traded and should be adhered to.

Applicants are reminded that, should groundwater or surface water courses be at risk of contamination during or after development, the Environment Agency should be approached for approval of measures to protect water resources separately, unless an Agency condition already forms part of this permission.

Reason: The details are required prior to commencement to protect human health and the environment in accordance with policy DM3 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009).

15 There shall be no more than 26 residential units at the site.

Reason: To ensure the site is not overdeveloped.

16 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers HD0049-03, SK01 and SK02

Reason: To identify the approved plan/s and to avoid doubt.

INFORMATIVE NOTES TO APPLICANT

1. This permission relates only to that required under the Town & Country Planning Acts and does not include any consent or approval under any other enactment or under the Building Regulations. Any other consent or approval which is necessary must be obtained from the appropriate authority.
2. The applicant is advised that in order to comply with this permission it will be necessary for the developer of the site to enter into an agreement with Central Bedfordshire Council as Highway Authority under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure the satisfactory completion of the access and associated road improvements. Further details can be obtained from the Development Control Group, Development Management Division, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford SG17 5TQ.

3. The applicant is advised that if it is the intention to request Central Bedfordshire Council as Local Highway Authority, to adopt the proposed highways within the site as maintainable at the public expense then details of the specification, layout and alignment, width and levels of the said highways together with all the necessary highway and drainage arrangements, including run off calculations shall be submitted to the Development Control Group, Development Management Division, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford SG17 5TQ . No development shall commence until the details have been approved in writing and an Agreement made under Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 is in place.

4. The applicant is advised that no highway surface water drainage system designed as part of a new development, will be allowed to enter any existing highway surface water drainage system without the applicant providing evidence that the existing system has sufficient capacity to account for any highway run off generated by that development. Existing highway surface water drainage systems may be improved at the developers expense to account for extra surface water generated. Any improvements must be approved by the Development Control Group, Development Management Division, Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House, Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford SG17 5TQ.

Statement required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Part 5, Article 35

Discussion with the applicant to seek an acceptable solution was not necessary in this instance. The Council has therefore acted pro-actively to secure a sustainable form of development in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraphs 186 and 187) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

DECISION

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