

Item No. 7

APPLICATION NUMBER	CB/18/00192/OUT
LOCATION	Clifton Farm, Church Street, Clifton, Shefford, SG17 5EX
PROPOSAL	Outline Planning Application - Residential development of The Paddocks, Clifton Farm Barns Road, Clifton SG17 5EX with the erection of 7 detached houses and 7 semi-detached/terraced assisted houses.
PARISH	Clifton
WARD	Arlesey
WARD COUNCILLORS	Cllrs Dalgarno, Shelvey & Wenham
CASE OFFICER	Martin Plummer
DATE REGISTERED	19 January 2018
EXPIRY DATE	20 April 2018
APPLICANT	The Hale Trust
AGENT	BraesHall Ltd
REASON FOR COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE	Major application / departure to Development Plan
RECOMMENDED DECISION	Outline Application - Recommended for Approval

Summary of recommendation:

The application site is outside the settlement envelope of the village and therefore represents a departure from the development plan. The report outlines that there will be some visual impact but that such harm is out-weighed by the sustainable location of the development and that the development would provide additional housing (50% of which will be affordable). The development is considered to represent a sustainable form of development and there is considered to be no material harm to designated heritage assets, highway safety or access, ecology, trees or harmful increased flood risk.

Site Location:

The application site is situated on the northern edge of the village of Clifton - a small part of the application site is within the Clifton Conservation Area (as described below) whilst the majority of the site is located outside but adjacent to that Conservation Area.

The application site is a reasonably level and rectangular shaped field, which has been previously used for horse grazing and is undeveloped.

The north eastern boundary of the site features trees and hedgerow and beyond that open farmland which is within the applicants control.

To the west is the redevelopment of the former farmyard. That site has been developed to form a collection of residential development now known as Clifton Farm Barns. To the north of those barns (and north west of the application site) and, currently under construction, are three detached dwellings.

To the south the application site abuts Sears Close, a cul-de-sac development of mainly detached houses. To the east of the application site is a small cul-de-sac development at the end of Bilberry Road.

The Application:

Members will recall that the application was reported to the June Committee but a decision was deferred until the July Committee.

The application site is divided into two areas separated by a band of mature trees which cross the site from the south west to the north east – henceforth described as the western and eastern parcel respectfully. The application seeks outline planning permission (with all matters reserved) to erect seven open market dwellings (described in the applicants Design and Access Statement as ‘traditional styled detached houses’), on the western parcel of land (which occupies a site area of approximately 0.90ha). Access to this part of the development site will be via the access which serves Clifton Farm Barns Road off Church Street. That access is within the Clifton Conservation Area whilst the seven open market dwellings proposed are outside of the Conservation Area.

The eastern parcel of land will include seven dwellings of either semi-detached or terraced dwellings which are proposed to be affordable units - this part of the site is also outside of the Conservation Area. This parcel of land occupies a site area of some 0.27ha with access off Bilberry Road. The applicant is in discussion with Settle (formerly known as North Herts Housing Association) in relation to this parcel of land.

RELEVANT POLICIES:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012)

Core Strategy and Development Management Policies - North 2009

CS1 Development Strategy

CS2 Developer Contributions

CS3 Healthy and Sustainable Communities

CS4 Linking Communities - Accessibility and Transport

CS5 Providing Homes

CS6 Delivery and Timing of Housing Provision

CS7 Affordable Housing

CS13 Climate Change

CS14 High Quality Development
CS15 Heritage
CS16 Landscape and Woodland
CS17 Green Infrastructure
CS18 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
DM1 Renewable Energy
DM2 Sustainable Construction of New Buildings
DM3 High Quality Development
DM4 Development Within and Beyond Settlement Envelopes
DM10 Housing Mix
DM13 Heritage in Development
DM14 Landscape and Woodland
DM15 Biodiversity
DM16 Green Infrastructure
DM17 Accessible Green Spaces

Central Bedfordshire Local Plan - Emerging

The Central Bedfordshire Local Plan has reached submission stage and was submitted to the Secretary of State on 30 April 2018. The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 216) stipulates that from the day of publication, decision-takers may also give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The apportionment of this weight is subject to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan;
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies;
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework.

Reference should be made to the Central Bedfordshire Submission Local Plan which should be given limited weight having regard to the above. The following policies are relevant to the consideration of this application: SP1, 7, EMP4, 5, HQ1, 2, 4, 11, T1, T4, T5, EE1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, DC1, 5, H1, 4, CC1, 2, HE1-3.

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Other Documents

Central Bedfordshire Design Guide (March 2014)

Relevant Planning History:

There is no relevant planning history specifically in relation to this parcel of land.

Consultees:

Clifton Parish Council

Objection on the following grounds:

- This site has not been identified for development and has added greatly to the village amenity for decades providing equestrian use for which there

remains a significant demand within the village. See applicants own supporting photograph PICT 5014. The site is clearly seen to enhance the views in and out of the Clifton Conservation area;

- The site is within Clifton Conservation area. The Clifton Conservation Area Assessment specifically mentions several of the properties immediately adjacent to the application site and the open space between it and Clifton Bury Farm is designated "an important green space". The site also adjoins Clifton Farm Barns and the grade 2 listed Clifton Farmhouse;
- The site is outside of the village envelope;
- Clifton All Saints Academy is at capacity in all grades except year 4. (3 vacancies) This is before the 182 houses in process over the next 2 years come on stream;
- Shefford Health centre is under significant pressure. The site lacks safe pedestrian access as there is no footpath along lengths of The Baulk / Church St;
- The Parish Council did not object to the three houses under construction on The Baulk, abutting this site, as they were viewed as being more desirable than the run-down farm buildings and abandoned farm equipment that littered the site as it stood. No rounding off" as referred to is needed as there was never any intention of the Parish Council supporting development on the Paddocks equestrian fields;
- Located as it is outside Clifton Settlement Envelope the application does not meet any of the qualifying criteria within CBC Policy SP7 Development within Settlement Envelopes.

Highways

No objection subject to planning conditions.

Whilst the application is in outline with all matters reserved, including access, plans were needed to ensure that planning conditions to ensure that a layout could be provided.

The existing access road has a kerbed layout and a total road width of 8.3m can be provided which includes a 4.6m wide carriageway and 2m wide footway on the northern side.

There is an existing planted service margin of 1.7m on the southern side. This is a slight under provision of 2.0m for the carriageway but tracking drawings have been provided to demonstrate that the largest vehicle expected to use the site can be accommodated. The proposed northern side footway could be reduced to 1.8m without compromising pedestrian safety and increasing the carriageway width to 4.8m when reserved matters are applied for.

The existing access road onto Church Street has visibility of 2.4m x 17m which would accord with Manual for Streets for a road where speeds are expected to be 15mph. The condition of the road would likely deter high speeds on Church Street.

SuDS Management
Team

No objection subject to a planning condition requiring further information in respect of the following:-

- A scheme which a) avoids permeable paving in shared ownership, or b) we receive guarantees that such permeable paving will be maintained i.e. by a maintenance company or clearly stated in property deeds;
- The potential provision of an infiltration/attenuation basin or pond in the adjacent field to the north east is explored;
- Infiltration needs to be demonstrated as viable with evidence at reserved matters. If infiltration is not used then discharge off rate/volume of discharge off site must be restricted to at or below greenfield equivalents. The down stream network must also be shown to have sufficient capacity, condition and outfall to accept flows from the development;
- Any works on or near to a watercourse may require Land Drainage Consent under the Land Drainage Act 1991 and must comply with the Council's own Drainage Byelaws which includes ensuring a 9m

easement is provided on both sides of a watercourse to enable access for its maintenance in the future.

Pollution Team

No objection and comment that noise, air quality and contamination issues appear not to be of concern due to surrounding housing and the information provided in the phase 1 report.

Conservation Officer

No objection

The site adjoins the Conservation Area on its western edge with the listed buildings of Clifton Farmhouse and Clifton Barns to the south. The CCAA (Clifton Conservation Area Appraisal) identifies an important open space to the west of the application site.

The CCAA sets out that there is no dominant architectural style or use of materials in the Area. The village has expanded over the years with its rural character having undergone significant change particularly since WWII. However, there is still a strong sense of agricultural tradition with the presence of Radley Farm, Clifton Bury Farm and Clifton Farm with weatherboard outbuildings making a positive contribution to rural and agricultural character of the village as seen at the northern part of Church Street.

Although not located within the boundary of the Conservation Area but abutting it, any development will need to reflect these characteristics and ensure that new development positively contributes to the setting of listed buildings and /or the character and appearance of the conservation area, in terms of siting, scale, design and materials used.

In terms of location, the proposed development is considered acceptable as it is set back from the main road and somewhat obscured by the current developments to its western boundary. Consideration should be given to boundary treatment with the existing developments to the western boundary.

Views into the Conservation Area from the northern approach along Church Street need to be given careful consideration to ensure that the proposed development

does not become overly dominant when viewed against existing dwellings on either side of Church Street.

The proposed layout is considered to acceptable in terms of density and relationship to the existing development and pattern of neighbouring properties. Any linear form of development should be discouraged as this is considered not to reflect the rural and somewhat organic development of the conservation area.

The proposed housing type for the western paddock is considered acceptable with the use of traditional materials. The design reflects a vernacular approach to compliment that of the adjoining traditional farm houses with good variation in roofscapes and buildings planes well-articulated.

The proposed assisted housing for the eastern is considered to relate to the adjacent housing association dwellings.

In summary the proposed development is considered acceptable and unlikely to cause any significant harm to the heritage assets in this case the character and appearance of Clifton Conservation area and therefore complying with policies CS15 and DM13 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2009) and adopted design guide and Central Government advice contained within section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).

IDB

The application proposes discharge to soakaways – if soakaways are not found to be suitable the IDB's consent will be required to discharge into the watercourse.

Housing Development
Officer

The application is fully supported as it provides for 7 affordable homes which represents a provision of 50% affordable housing which is in excess of the current affordable housing policy requirement of 35%. The provision of 50% affordable housing is much welcomed.

The supporting documentation does not indicate the tenure split of the affordable units. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) has identified a tenure requirement from qualifying affordable housing sites as being 73% affordable rent and 27% intermediate tenure.

This makes a requirement of 5 units of affordable rent and 2 units of intermediate tenure (shared ownership) from the development.

The cluster of 7 affordable dwellings is acceptable as they adjoin an existing established affordable development. The cluster of 7 affordable dwellings falls below the maximum cluster sizes outlined within the submitted draft local plan and, from a management perspective would also be acceptable.

The proposed mix of 3 x 2 bed houses and 4 x 3 bed affordable houses follows the identified needs from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) whereby the SHMA identifies the main affordable housing requirement as two and three bed dwellings.

Community Engagement Officer

No comments are made in respect of financial contributions towards community buildings.

Education Spending Officer

Recommends the following financial contributions:-

EY	£14,517.72
Lower	£48,392.40
Middle	£48,694.46
Upper	£59,712.31

A new lower school site is required to manage the long term need for places in the local area.

If a new school site is secured locally, then the early years and lower school funding from this development would go towards creating early years and lower school places within a new 2 form entry lower school on that site. If a site cannot be secured in time to accommodate pupils from this development the early years and lower school contribution would go towards a project at Clifton All Saints Academy.

The middle school contribution would go towards the expansion of Henlow Academy or such other identified education project (in accordance with reg 123(3) as identified by Central Bedfordshire Council and notified to the owner/developer).

The upper school contribution would go towards the creation of additional upper school places at Samuel Whitbread Academy, or Pix Brook Academy, or such other identified education project (in accordance with reg 123(3) as identified by Central Bedfordshire Council and notified to the owner/developer).

Ecology

The site forms grade 2 agricultural land and the Defra 25 Year Plan advises on the need to protect 'our best agricultural land.'. Best and Most Versatile Land is accepted to contain Grades 1 - 3a.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal does not identify any potential protected species interest though there is some confusion over the presence of badgers on site as 5.2.1 refers to badger faeces found in the grassland areas and yet 5.3 it states 'no evidence of latrines'.

The retention of the central hedgerow is welcomed as this forms a key ecological corridor through the site to the wider countryside. Policy EE2 of the draft local plan states, 'development proposals within, or in close proximity to, an ecological corridor should enhance the functionality and connectivity of the corridor.'. The addition of planting to the east of this hedge within the 'assisted living' area is in accordance with this.

Further enhancements would be expected within the built development also and integrated bat, bird and bee bricks would be expected together with hedgehog holes in fenced boundaries and pollinator friendly planting schemes – a planning condition is recommended in relation to this.

Tree and Landscape Officer

An Arboricultural Appraisal has been submitted which identifies all trees on site and their retention categories. Under the current layout the impact on trees on and offsite will be minimal with development being away from root protection areas of trees or with minimal encroachment.

There is understood to be a Highways issue with regards to the Ash tree identified as T5 in the Arboricultural Appraisal - a category C tree close to the access point. This tree appears to be outside the red line for this application but the access is joint for this development and the development currently under construction. The combination of a requirement for a footpath along with

service runs will make the retention of this tree unfeasible and as such its removal would be acceptable.

As part of the final landscape detail sufficient space for a specimen tree as a focal point to the entrance for these developments should be provided. A tree protection plan should also be supplied based on final layout and design clearly identifying the position of tree protection fencing erected at a distance and detail found in BS5837 2012 Trees in relation to Design, Demolition and Construction.

Other Representations:

Neighbours

78 representations in objection have been received which are summarised as follows:-

- Development is outside of the settlement envelope;
- The Council can demonstrate a five year supply of housing and the development is not necessary;
- The site is not allocated for development in the emerging plan;
- Harmful impact on the village setting, views into and out of the site and overall character and tranquillity of edge of village/countryside location;
- Harmful impact on the way walkers perceive and enjoy the route to the north and associated rights of way;
- There is no pedestrian access and there will be harmful conflict between pedestrians and vehicles;
- The development will lead to significant and harmful increases in traffic movements and associated congestion in the village and surrounding highway network;
- Loss of green open space;
- Harmful impact on setting of listed buildings and Conservation Area;
- Loss of biodiversity and ecology;
- Inadequate local infrastructure for development – schools, medical care, police, public transport;
- Harmful impact on the living conditions of neighbouring properties in terms of overlooking, overbearing, loss of light and loss of outlook/tranquillity afforded by the existing site;
- The site was previously used for horse grazing and the development will result in the loss of the space for this activity;

- The application is in outline form only with indicative information only – this may all change at a later stage;
- Type of accommodation is not suitable and no provision for affordable units;
- Insufficient sewerage capacity;
- Inadequate access for emergency vehicles.

Determining Issues:

The main considerations of the application are;

1. Principle
2. Sustainability
2. Affect on the Character and Appearance of the Area
3. The Historic Environment
4. Neighbouring Amenity
5. Highway Considerations
6. Other Considerations

Considerations

1. Principle

- 1.1 The site lies outside of the settlement envelope of Clifton and is therefore located on 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). Clifton is designated as a large village where Policy DM4 limits new housing to small scale developments. On the basis of Policy DM4 a residential proposal outside of the settlement envelope would be regarded as contrary to policy – a position recognised by the Parish Council and other third parties. However, it is necessary for the Council to consider whether material considerations outweigh the non-compliance with Policy
- 1.2 The Council is able to demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land in excess of the 5 year requirement. Therefore, the Council's policies concerned with the supply of housing are not considered to be out of date – the 'tilted-balance' test in paragraph 14 of the NPPF is not therefore engaged. However, proposals should still be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development – that is the determining consideration in this application.

2. Sustainability

- 2.1 Clifton is designated as a large village. Taken in isolation it is a settlement that contains a number of services including village shops, petrol station, restaurant/pubs, school, local businesses, community halls and public transport availability via buses. In addition to this Clifton is very closely related to Shefford which is designated as a Minor Service Centre. Shefford has a range of additional

and alternative services that can be accessed by residents of Clifton. Taking these points into account it is considered that, as a settlement, Clifton should be regarded as being sustainable.

- 2.2 Settlements that are classified as Large Villages are considered to be able to accommodate small scale housing and employment uses together with new facilities to serve the village. Although small scale development is not defined, the scale of the proposed development should reflect the scale of the settlement in which it is to be located. The scale of this proposal is considered to be reflective of the scale of development of the area.
- 2.3 Although it is acknowledged that the development is contrary to policy DM4 it is also considered that the individual merits of this site and its relationship to the existing settlement (as explained in more detail below) are such that the loss of open countryside in this instance is not considered to result in a significantly harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area. This is particularly apparent as the application site has an appropriate relationship with existing residential development to the west, south and east.
- 2.4 Weight can also be given to the benefit of the site providing what could be shown to strengthen the Council's housing land supply, particularly in respect of the provision of affordable housing, where 50% of the proposed development is allocated for affordable housing – a position which is fully supported by the Housing Team. Affordable Housing provision can be secured through the S106 agreement which the applicant is agreeable to.
- 2.5 It is therefore considered that while the proposal is contrary to policy DM4 the loss of open countryside and impact on the character of the area is not, in this instance, harmful to the extent that it would warrant a reason to refuse planning permission. Therefore, it is considered that the scheme can be considered acceptable. Additional material planning considerations may contribute towards the benefits and the dis-benefits of the development and can impact of the final planning balance. These are considered in the report below.

3. Affect on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 3.1 The site is acknowledged to be outside of the settlement envelope and within an open area of undeveloped land. Commentary from third parties indicate that, until reasonably recently, the site was used for the grazing of horses and that, in recent times, the condition and appearance of the land has been allowed to degrade – third parties speculate that such an action was to ensure that the opportunity to improve the appearance would add weight in favour of re-development.
- 3.2 Whether or not this is the case is not material to the determination of this application – the site (east and west) forms an undeveloped parcel of land which is open countryside. This said, the site is considered to form a close relationship with existing built development to three of the application sites boundaries – the built development at Clifton Farm Barns and the currently under-construction

development of three dwellings to the west of the site; Sears Close to the south and; residential dwellings within Bilberry Road to the east.

- 3.3 There is a significant band of trees which separate the two parcels of the development site, which the applicant proposes to retain and trees/hedgerow to the northern boundary of the application site (which the applicant proposes to retain and strengthen with additional planting).
- 3.4 Views of the application site will be limited to that from private dwellings to the west, south and east of the site and from Church Street to the west of the site. There is a track/access to the west of the site which leads from Church Street to the north east linking to byways which are understood to be used informally by dog walkers and walkers alike. There are therefore views of the site from the track to the north of the site.
- 3.5 The provision of built development in the form of residential dwellings will inevitably alter the character and appearance of the site. The indicative plans and information provided indicate that the western parcel, and that closest to heritage assets, will be occupied by detached (and potentially quite large) dwellings which are nonetheless well spaced, with large generous garden spaces. The western parcel will have a density of around 13 dph and will be more visible from Church Street and the access track to the west compared with the eastern parcel. However, the western parcel will be viewed in the context of the developments associated with Clifton Farm Barns and the three dwellings currently under construction (which in themselves are quite large buildings set on good sized plots). Whilst there will inevitably be a change to the character and openness of the western parcel, the provision of low density development in the manner suggested and retention/provision of planting to the boundaries will reduce the degree of impact to an acceptable level.
- 3.6 The eastern parcel forms a higher density of development of around 30dph. Planting is proposed to be retained and strengthened to the northern and western boundary and this element of the development site has a much closer relationship with the higher density of development within Bilberry Road to the east.
- 3.7 In overall terms the provision of residential development on this open, undeveloped parcel of meadow space will fundamentally alter its character and some harm is attached to this impact which does weigh against the development. However, the degree of harm is considered to be tempered by the relationship with existing built development and the retention/provision of soft landscaping within and on the boundaries of the application site. Planning conditions can be imposed to limit the number of dwellings on the different parcels of land together with building heights.

4. Heritage Assets

- 4.1 The site is located adjacent to the Clifton Conservation Area and there are listed buildings to the south west and west of the application site within that designated

area. In the consideration of the impact on listed buildings, the Planning Act requires special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. There is a similar provision in the act in relation to Conservation Areas.

- 4.2 The NPPF provides guidance in relation to the consideration of designated heritage matters such as listed buildings and Conservation Areas, and this sets out that where development proposals will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 4.3 Having regard to the comments from the Conservation Officer there is considered to be less than substantial harm to the setting of heritage assets. Whilst the application is in outline form only a significant level of detail is provided which explores how the development may potentially come forward at reserved matters stage. The indicative information provided shows that an acceptable relationship is achievable between the development site and designated heritage assets. The development will provide public benefits associated with bringing forward residential development and affordable development to assist in maintaining the Councils five year supply of housing and to assist in boosting the supply of housing which is a priority identified in the NPPF. The development therefore satisfies section 12 of the NPPF and the setting of heritage assets will be preserved.

5. Highway matters

- 5.1 The Parish Council and the vast majority of those in objection are critical of the likely increase in traffic movements associated with the development and the cumulative impact that this will have on the local highway network of Clifton and the surroundings including access onto the A507. Concern is also levelled at such increases in traffic movements and the unsuitability of Church Street in terms of its road width and lack of a pedestrian footway and the increased risk of conflict between pedestrians and vehicles – a highway safety concern therefore.
- 5.2 Members should note that what is being considered is an outline application with all matters reserved, including access. The Council are therefore only considering whether, in principle, development on this site is acceptable. In this respect, whilst it is proper to consider whether, in principle, likely access arrangements (and associated traffic movements/highway safety/etc) are acceptable, the detailed and technical highway requirements are reserved and therefore not under consideration.
- 5.3 In terms of the impact of increased traffic congestion in Clifton and the surroundings, Members will be aware that the NPPF places a high test on the assessment of highway impact – there must be a severe impact. The provision of 14 additional dwellings will, of course, result in additional traffic movements and the historic road pattern and layout of Clifton and its road network has the potential to increase movements within and around the settlement. However, the provision

of just 14 dwellings is not, having regard to the advice from the Highway Officers, likely to result in such a harmful or severe impact.

- 5.4 In respect of highway safety matters, it is acknowledged that there is no pedestrian footway along the northern part of Church Street which currently serves as an access to a several properties off the street. From representations received, Church Street is used reasonably regularly by walkers and dog walkers alike and this has been witnessed during site visits. The question to consider then, is whether 7 additional dwellings (associated with the western parcel) and the likely vehicle movements associated with such a number of dwellings together with existing vehicle traffic will result in a harmful highway safety impact that warrants refusal of the application. No objections are raised by the Highway Officer on this basis and, as noted by the Highway Officer, it is considered that vehicle speeds along Church Street are not likely to be significant, given the existing road conditions and, it is noted that there are spaces within the highway verge and drives where pedestrians can make use of in the event a vehicle movement. Traffic movements associated with 7 additional dwellings are, as noted previously, not likely to be significant and the impact on highway safety is, for the reasons outlined previously not considered to be to such an extent as to warrant the refusal of the application. No such issues are identified with the eastern parcel where there are pedestrian footways along Bilberry Road.
- 5.5 During the process of the application, the Highway Officer has been in discussion with the applicant regarding the potential to secure a widening of the access road leading to the western parcel and associated service margins - plans have been submitted which have satisfied the Highway Officer and Design Guide requirements. The provision of a footway to the north of the widened access will, as noted by the Tree and Landscape Officer, result in the need for removal of an Ash Tree to the site frontage with Church Street. However, no objections are raised by that Officer in respect of such a removal, subject to appropriate replacement. Landscaping is reserved and can be considered in any future application.
- 5.6 During the discussion of the application during the June Committee, questions were raised in respect of whether the applicant has a right of access from Bilberry Road to access the site and, whether the existing parking (which would be removed to provide the access into the site) will be provided within the site.
- 5.7 The applicant has provided a copy of the land registry title for the site which sets out that they do have a right to access the application site via Bilberry Road at the position of two existing car parking spaces. The register also requires that, in the event that vehicular access is required via Bilberry Road, that there is provision of replacement parking as near as possible to the dwellings affected - a planning condition is included relating to this matter. The applicant has been requested to provide an indicative layout plan for the affordable units demonstrating how the 7 affordable units and associated parking (including replacement parking) can be

provided within the eastern parcel of the application site. Members will be updated at the Committee Meeting in respect of this.

6. Other Considerations

6.1 Loss of land for equestrian use / best most versatile use of land

The NPPF sets out that local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of BMV agricultural land. Furthermore it is stated that where the development of significant agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality in preference to that of higher quality.

6.2 The applicant comments that the area is shown as grade 2/3 on the Natural England classification map but the application site and adjoining land owned by the applicant has a depth of sand/gravel immediately underlying the topsoil and as a result is unable to retain sufficient moisture for crops to thrive, especially in dry periods. Such land is usually used for vegetable production but only if irrigation is readily available which is not the case at the application site. Such crops also rely on the spraying of chemicals and fertiliser inputs which are activities not conjusive with immediately surrounding residential areas. The applicant comments also that the site is too small for agricultural use.

6.3 The site area is not significant at just over a hectare and would not result in significant dis-benefit in terms of economic use of the land for agricultural or equestrian use.

6.4 Drainage

Some third parties raise concern in respect of the increased flood risk associated with the development. The Environment Agency flood risk maps indicate that the site is within flood zone 1 – a low area of fluvial flood risk and a very low risk of surface water flooding. The applicant has submitted a flood risk assessment and additional information in relation to the more detailed aspects of surface water drainage which the Councils Flood Risk Management Team raise no objection. The applicants drainage strategy incorporates the provision of permeable surfaces which will drain via infiltration within the site or discharge to a surface water drain to the north of the site (and within the applicants control). Should there be issues with management or maintenance of permeable surfaces, the applicant proposes to provide either a surface water basin/pond or swale on land to the north of the application site (and within the applicants control). The Flood Risk Management Team comment that further information is required in respect of the suitability of the site for infiltration and maintenance of any drainage features - a detailed drainage strategy is therefore required based on this and other technical work which, in the interests of flood risk is necessary and reasonable. It is therefore considered that an appropriate drainage strategy can be incorporated which will ensure that there will be no significant or harmful flood risk associated with the development.

6.5 Ecology

Some third parties are critical of the impact on biodiversity and wildlife – no such objections are raised by the Ecology Officer and, it is noted that the application includes retention of landscape features within the site and a planning condition requiring an ecological enhancement strategy will ensure a net gain in biodiversity.

6.6 S106 agreement

Spending Officers were consulted and comments returned from Education. The following contributions are proposed to be included within a S106 Legal Agreement, should Members support the application.

EY £14,517.72

Lower £48,392.40

Middle £48,694.46

Upper £59,712.31

6.7 Third parties are critical of existing education capacity within the settlement and that the development will lead to capacity issues. No objections are raised by the Education Spending Officer and it is considered that, subject to S106 contributions, that the development will result in an acceptable impact on existing education capacity. No comment has been received from NHS Spending Officers.

7. **Whether the scheme is Sustainable Development**

7.1 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. However the impact is not considered to be of such significance that it would warrant a reason to refuse planning permission. It will sit adjacent to existing residential properties on three of its four sides and there will be no significant loss of agricultural land. Whilst materially altering the character of the area the development will not appear isolated but will relate well to the existing settlement and built form and preserve the setting of heritage assets. The development retains existing landscape features which will ensure retention of biodiversity which can be enhanced by the planning condition recommended by the Ecology Officer. Flood risk is neutral.

7.2 Social

The provision of housing is a benefit to the scheme which, together with the provision of affordable housing, should be given significant weight.

7.3 The site is within walking distance to an existing bus route and village services and the wider village is served by existing footways making the site accessible to the village core. The report has detailed that Clifton is regarded as a sustainable settlement and it is considered that it offers the services and facilities that can accommodate the growth from this scheme. Impacts on local infrastructure can

be appropriately offset via financial contributions which the applicant has agreed to pay.

7.4 Economic

The economic benefits of construction employment are noted. 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.

8. **Planning balance**

- 8.1 The development proposal represents a conflict with policy DM4 of the Core Strategy however, the NPPF sets out that there is a presumption in favour of development and there is a need to boost the supply of housing. For the reasons set out the development is considered to be sustainable and no significant harm to any material considerations is identified.

Recommendation:

That Planning Permission be **APPROVED** subject to the applicant entering into a legal agreement to secure financial contributions and affordable housing and, subject to the following planning conditions:-

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS

- 1 Application for the approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority within three years from the date of this permission. The development shall begin not later than two years from the final approval of the reserved matters or, if approved on different dates, the final approval of the last such matter 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.

- 2 **No development shall take place until approval of the details of the access, layout, appearance, landscaping and scale of the development (herein called “the reserved matters”) has been obtained in writing from the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: To comply with Part 3 Article 6 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 2015.

- 3 The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out except in complete accordance with the details shown on the submitted plans, numbers Existing Site Plan 1A, Location Plan 1A, Proposed Site Plan 2A, 001 A, 002 B, 003 B, 004 B, 005 B, 006 B, 007 B.

Reason: To identify the approved plans and to avoid doubt.

- 4 The number of dwellings approved on the site shall be restricted to 14 as shown on the approved drawings and application form.

Reason: To ensure that adequate provision of housing is provided which is justified in viability terms having regard to the conflict with policy DM4 of the CSDMP 2009.

- 5 Prior to any above ground works, an ecological design strategy addressing compensation and enhancement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The strategy shall include:-
- a) Review of the site potential and constraints.
 - b) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed works.
 - c) Detailed working methods to achieve stated objectives including locations of integrated bird and bat boxes to be erected in accordance with RSPB and BCT guidelines on appropriate scale maps and plans.
 - d) Details of lighting considerations to prevent disturbance to bats.
 - e) Type and source of materials to be used where appropriate, e.g. native species of local provenance.
 - f) Timetable for implementation demonstrating that works are aligned with proposed phasing of development.
 - g) Persons responsible for implementing the works
 - h) Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance.
 - i) Details for disposal of any wastes arising from works
- The EDS shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure the proposal delivers satisfactory ecological gains in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 6 Prior to the commencement of any development hereby permitted a detailed surface water drainage design shall be submitted to and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Where surface water drainage is provided in shared spaces on the site, the maintenance of this shall be secured by any means necessary and demonstrated to the LPA for approval. The final approved design shall be fully implemented and subsequently maintained, in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority

The scheme to be submitted shall include:

1. Plans and calculations showing sufficient disposal, storage and conveyance of surface water (up to and including for the 1in100 year event + a 40% allowance for climate change).
2. Results of site-specific infiltration testing to support the design of infiltration devices (carried out in accordance with BRE 365), or

calculations to demonstrate greenfield rate/volume will not be exceeded where discharging off site and evidence that the downstream network shall have sufficient capacity, condition and outfall to accept the development's run off.

3. Details of the full design of the drainage scheme in its entirety and use of SUDS, including flow controls and water quality management.
4. Overview of proposed construction of the system and any phasing of works.
5. Confirmation of the management and maintenance arrangements for the surface water drainage system in its entirety, including any split in public and private responsibilities.

Reason: To ensure the approved system will function to a satisfactory minimum standard of operation and prevent the increased risk of flooding both on and off site for the lifetime of the development in accordance with para 103 NPPF and the Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems (DEFRA, 2015); and to ensure that the implementation and long term operation of a sustainable drainage system is in line with what has been approved, in accordance with Written statement - HCWS161.

This planning condition is required to be pre-commencement in order to ensure adequate drainage design is approved and able to be implemented at the time of initial construction works relating to the development and in the interests of flood risk.

- 7 Prior to the commencement of development details of width and junction radii improvements of the existing junction/access road (Church Street/Clifton Farm Barns) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and no building shall be occupied until that junction/access road has been constructed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway and of the proposed estate road.

This condition is pre-commencement to ensure adequate access arrangements into the site are provided for construction works in the interests of highway safety and access.

- 8 Visibility splays shall be provided at all internal road junctions within the site. The minimum dimensions to provide the required splay lines shall be 2.4m measured along the centre line of the side road from its junction with the channel to the through road and 17m measured from the centre line of the side road along the channel of the through road. The vision splays required shall be provided and defined on the site by or on behalf of the developers and be entirely free of any obstruction.

Reason: To provide adequate visibility at road junction in the interest of road safety.

- 9 Within the submission of any reserved matters planning application, car and cycle parking and any roads or footpaths shall be laid out and drained in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide September 2014 or other such documents that replaces it. In addition, within the submission of any reserved matters application, plans shall be provided to show an independent vehicular turning head for an 11.5 metre refuse collection vehicle.

Reason: In order to minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway and of the proposed estate road and to ensure a satisfactory standard of development in accordance with the Central Bedfordshire Design Guide September 2014.

- 10 Prior to the commencement of any above ground building works, details of the provision of lifetime homes for the affordable units shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure appropriate housing design for a wide age range of the population in accordance with policy DM10 of the CSDMP 2009.

- 11 Within the submission of any reserved matters planning application, details of parking to replace those displaced within Bilberry Road shall be submitted with layout drawings relating to the development. Such parking shall be located as close to, sofar as is practicable, to the existing dwellings in Bilberry Road effected by the removal of parking spaces associated with the approved development.

Reason: To ensure adequate provision of parking for existing residents within Bilberry Road.

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.

Statement required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 - Part 6, Article 35

The Council acted pro-actively through positive engagement with the applicant during the determination process which led to improvements to the scheme. 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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