



Appendix B - Pre-application submission



Pre Application Planning Report

On behalf of Cala Homes (North Home Counties) Ltd

Residential Development
Burford Grange, Bedford Road, Ickleford

DLA Ref: 2015/215
July 2016

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report is submitted on behalf of Cala Homes (North Homes Counties) Ltd to support a request for pre application advice for the development at Burford Grange, Bedford Road, Ickleford for residential development. The report site is a proposed allocation in the North Hertfordshire draft Local Plan (NHLP) preferred options.

Summary

1.2 It is proposed to develop the site for 49 dwellings, including the provision of open space and a new access from Bedford Road. This is in line with the Council's emerging Local Plan, due to be subject to Pre-Submission consultation later this year.

1.3 There is a need to increase the rate of housebuilding, both nationally and locally, and Government policy is set out to promote this, for example through the presumption in favour of sustainable development that runs through plan-making and decision-taking.

1.4 North Hertfordshire District Council cannot presently demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land.

1.5 There are several constraints to development such as the Green Belt designation and the Landscape and Open Space pattern, nevertheless the site has been identified as being suitable and deliverable for residential development in the Council's Site Selection Matrix and the SHLAA.

1.6 The site is well located in terms of public transport and access to local facilities and services. The principle of the proposed access is considered acceptable in terms of highway safety.

1.7 In overall terms, the planning benefits are sufficient to outweigh any adverse impacts arising from the proposal.

2.0 THE REPORT SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The report site is known as Burford Grange and extends to around 2.4 hectares. It is accessed from the A600 Bedford Road running north and south past the site. The site currently contains a large dwelling, together with various outbuildings and lorry storage. We understand part of the site is also used for commercial purposes.
- 2.2 Ickleford is a village just north of the town of Hitchin in North Hertfordshire district. It has a population of around 1,800 people. The village has a primary school, 3 pubs, a hair salon and a general store. Ickleford is described in the draft Local Plan as a Category A Village, the 2nd tier of the Settlement Hierarchy. As such it is a sustainable location for future growth.
- 2.3 The village contains a mix of uses but is predominantly residential. The wider area is characterised by medium density residential development, largely to the north and east of the site towards the main part of the village.

Fig 1. Report Site



3.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 This pre-application report has been prepared to seek the Council's feedback on the development of the site for residential purposes. The site could accommodate approximately 49 dwellings and the proposed layout is illustrated in Fig 2 below which includes a mix of detached and terraced dwellings, including an element of affordable housing.

3.2 The proposed layout takes a new road into the site from a new access point towards the eastern edge of the site.

3.3 The proposal includes an area of open space towards the centre of the site. Hedgerows and landscaping will be maintained and supplemented where necessary.

Fig 2. Indicative Site Layout



4.0 SUITABILITY OF THE SITE FOR DEVELOPMENT

4.1 The site has already been identified in the Council's draft Local Plan Preferred Options as being suitable for development. The site is within the village of Ickleford which is an important village within North Hertfordshire where some additional housing is needed in line with the Council's housing requirement of 14,400, based on a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) from 2015.

KEY PLANNING ISSUES

Policy and Principle – emerging policy context

4.2 Work has begun on a draft NHLP, and a Preferred Options consultation took place in December 2014.

4.3 The draft Local Plan (December 2014) acknowledged that Green Belt sites would be needed to meet the overall housing target. Specifically, the Burford Grange site was included as a proposed allocation (IC2) in the draft Local Plan for 48 dwellings. It was one of only two sites proposed in Ickleford and the largest by some margin.

4.4 The next round of consultation on the draft Local Plan is due in October 2016. In advance of this, a report was submitted to North Hertfordshire Council on 20 July 2016 outlining the likely contents of the Pre-Submission Local Plan. In this report the Burford Grange site continued to be included as an allocation, although the estimated capacity had reduced from 48 dwellings to 40 dwellings. The updated 2016 SHLAA explained this reduction as follows: *“For the purposes of the SHLAA, it is assumed that the existing Grange building is retained and the dwelling estimate has been reduced to reflect this”*.

4.5 The proposal on which pre-application advice is sought does not propose to retain the existing Grange building. Burford Grange is of no particular architectural merit, is not listed and is not within a Conservation Area. There is no particular reason to retain the existing buildings and it is considered a better use of the site to develop it comprehensively.

4.6 As part of the evidence base for the NHLP, the Council has assessed the development potential of the report site. The Council's assessment of the site is set out in a number of places:

- Green Belt Review Part 1 – broad areas
- Green Belt Review Part 1 – site-specific analysis
- Site Selection Matrix

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

4.7 The Council's Green Belt Review Part 1, is in relation to the broader contribution of Green Belt around Ickleford. The primary role of the Green Belt in this area is to prevent the northward sprawl of Hitchin. A lesser role prevents coalescence between Hitchin and Ickleford, although as Green Belt is intended to prevent towns growing together and Ickleford is not a "town", then this impact carries less weight.

4.8 In relation to specific site proposed in Ickleford, the Council's Green Belt Review Part 1 concludes that it is making a moderate contribution to the Green Belt.

4.9 The Council's Site Selection Matrix (November 2014) highlights some issues that will be need to be addressed within this application as set out below:

- An ecology study will be undertaken to examine the extent of the nearby Wildlife Site referred to as County Wildlife Site 11/038 Westmill Lane, Ickleford.
- Sites of more than 10 dwellings in Hertfordshire require a full Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) and will need to be explained through a Flood Risk Assessment.

- Also, a Flood Risk Assessment will be necessary due to the site being more than 1ha and this will assess the extent of flood plain and any mitigation measures, including surface water issues. However, from the Environment Agency flood plain maps (figure 4) the site appears to be outside of the flood plain.

4.10 However, the Council concludes that the site in Ickleford should be allocated and this recommendation was followed through into the Preferred Options plan.

Fig 3. Extract from Environment Agency Flood Plain map



“Rectangular site consisting of existing Grange building and adjoining undeveloped land. Site well defined by surrounding planting and site capable of achieving satisfactory relationship with existing residential properties on Westmill Lane. Would require release from the Green Belt and amendment to village boundary. For the purposes of the SHLAA, it is assumed that the existing Grange building is retained and the dwelling estimate has been reduced to reflect this.”

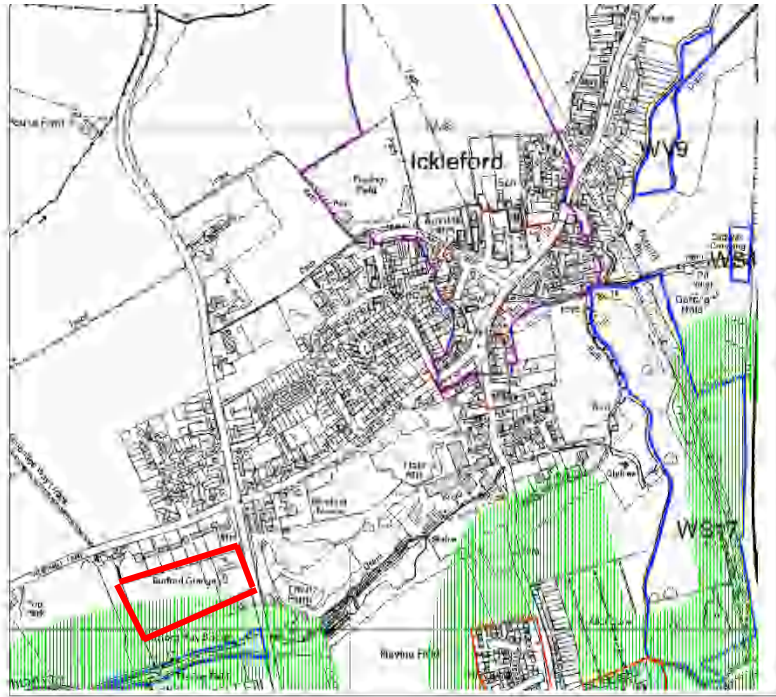
Policy and Principle – adopted policy context

4.11 The Council’s SHLAA (2016) concludes that the site is Suitable, Available and Achievable and provides a summary as follows:

4.12 The current Proposals Map accompanied by the adopted Local Plan (1996) designates the site as Green Belt and partly within a “Landscape and Open Space Pattern”, as shown in figure 3 (green vertical hatching).

4.13 It is accepted that, whilst the site has been identified as potentially being suitable for development, its allocation for housing does not form part of any formally adopted policy. Adopted policies 2 “Green Belt” and 21 “Landscape and Open Space Pattern” do not support development that will have a detrimental effect on the open uses of land and character.

Fig 4. Adopted Proposal Maps Extract



4.14 However regard must be had to the NPPF, paragraph 14 which sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development and also states that where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, permission should be granted 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 the this Framework indicate development should be restricted.

4.15 The Council has acknowledged its lack of 5 year housing supply (currently estimated at between 2.2 and 3.8 years' supply, as set out in the SHLAA, November 2014) and the need for housing in the District. The Council's policies relating to housing delivery are therefore considered to be out of date. The proposed development would make a contribution towards the Council's deficit in housing supply and this weighs in favour of the proposal, but must be balanced against any harm from the development.

4.16 As the site is currently in the Green Belt Very Special Circumstances need to be established to permit the proposed development. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance is clear that unmet housing need is unlikely to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt and other harm to constitute "very special circumstances".

4.17 However, housing provision remains a key government priority and unmet housing need can form part of the justification of very special circumstances. In situations elsewhere, notably in adjoining Central Bedfordshire, decisions have been made to grant planning permission for development in the Green Belt where there has been a shortfall of housing and where a site is consistent

with an emerging plan at an advanced stage. The Secretary of State has declined to call-in a number of such applications, taking the position that such decisions can be made locally.

- 4.18 The opportunity therefore exists to address the chronic five-year housing land supply issues in North Hertfordshire by bringing forward allocations in the emerging Local Plan. The site at Burford Grange is one that could be brought forward early without affecting the progress of the emerging Local Plan and without causing harm to local amenity.

Impact on the Countryside

- 4.19 The site is adjacent to residential development within the village of Ickleford. There is a mature hedgerow along the site's boundary and the site is not in a prominent or highly visible position. As such, whilst it is acknowledged that the site is presently Green Belt and partially within a landscape designation, the visual impact on the surrounding countryside will not be significant given these factors.

Accessibility and Sustainability

- 4.20 The site is easily accessible by public transport. A bus stop is located immediate outside the site and is served by the number 71, 89, 188, 190 and W12 bus routes with services to Hitchin,

Bedford and Biggleswade. The nearest railway station is located at Hitchin 1.5 miles from the site and provides frequent access to London and the north of England.

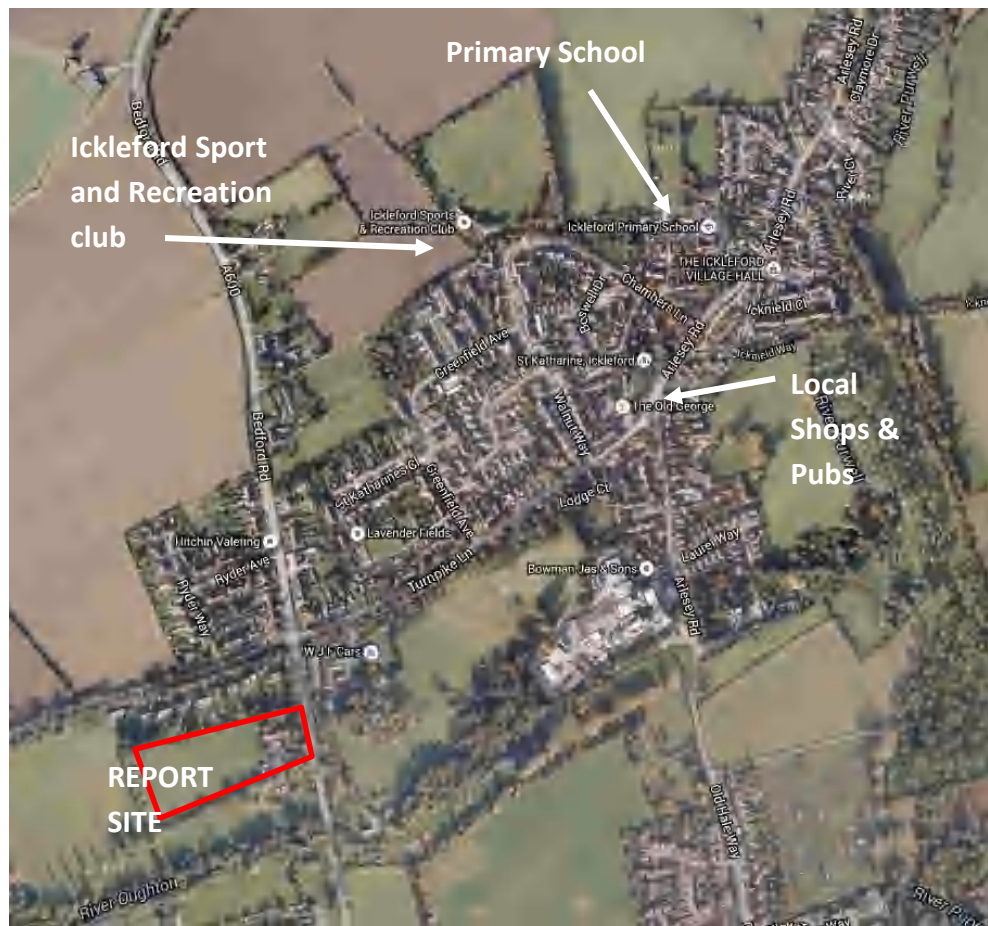
Proximity to Local Services and Facilities

- 4.21 The village of Ickleford has an existing population of approximately 1,800 people and is relatively well supported by a number of key local services, including a school, shops, public house, village hall and church, all of which would be within a kilometre from the report site. The walking distance to these local services and facilities is set out in Table 1 below and figure 5 below.

Table 1. Walking Distances to local facilities

Local Facility	Approximate distance from report site (metres)
Bus Stop	Outside the site
The Old George Pub	600m
St Katherine Church	675m
The Ickleford Stores	700m
Ickleford Sport and Recreation club	725m
Ickleford Primary School	850m
Ickleford Village Hall	875m

Fig 5. Local services and facilities



Highway Safety

- 4.22 Bedford Road is a straight road which has the benefit of speed restrictions of 30mph and 40mph passing the site. Visibility is therefore good and it is not anticipated that development of the site would raise any significant highway safety issues and the capacity of the local road network, from an initial inspection, appears sufficient.

Landscape and Ecology

- 4.23 The site is contained by established hedgerows, with some larger trees interspersed. The centre of the site is clear with the exception of a house, outbuildings and lorry storage to the east which are planned to be removed. The site has limited ecological potential and with appropriate mitigation could be adequately dealt with.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 This proposal is for the development of the site for 49 dwellings. The site is located within the village of Ickleford, albeit the current adopted policy restricts Green Belt development to this scale. This proposal is therefore contrary to this policy.

5.2 However, the proposal is in line with the emerging Local Plan, due to be the subject of pre-submission consultation later this year. Furthermore, there is a need to significantly boost the supply of housing coming forward, both nationally and within North Hertfordshire. In the absence of a five-year land supply, regard must be had to the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 14 of the NPPF and a determination made as to whether there would be adverse impacts arising from the proposed development that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal.

5.3 The site is located on the southern edge of Ickleford, and lies just outside of an existing residential developments. The site is sustainably located in relation to services and facilities and represents a suitable and deliverable site for a modest-scale residential development. New residential development on this

site will contribute towards housing need in the District and the additional dwellings will help support local services.

5.4 There are no physical barriers to development but there are several designations affecting the site. However, the draft NHLP acknowledges the importance of Green Belt sites in meeting local housing need and the report site is proposed for allocation through the draft NHLP, resolving these constraints. There are not anticipated to be any significant ecological constraints and the access to the site can be provided safely.

5.5 Given that the site is only partially located within a sensitive landscape area, is not located in a prominent location and will be largely contained by existing mature hedgerows, any harm caused to the visual amenity of the countryside is not considered to be significant.

5.6 It therefore follows that, on balance, the benefits of delivering housing in a sustainable location outweigh any adverse impacts of the proposed development.

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07 September 2016

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Dear Sir/Madam

**Residential development of 51 dwellings together with open space and access from Bedford Road
Burford Grange, Bedford Road, Ickleford, Hitchin, SG5 3XG**

I refer to the above site and your application for pre-application advice received on 18th August 2016. I also refer to the pre-application meeting on 25th August 2016 that took place at the District Council offices attended by myself as case officer and representatives of DLA Town Planning Ltd and Cala Homes.

As discussed at the meeting I set out below the main considerations to be taken into account in the event that a planning application is submitted for this site. At the meeting a new layout plan SK002 was submitted showing a potential layout to accommodate 51 dwellings and therefore I base my comments below on this revised drawing.

Principle of development

The site has now been selected in the emerging new local plan as a housing allocation site (Ref: IC3, dwelling estimate: 40 homes) and it is expected that this site will be included in the 'Proposed Submission Consultation' version of the local plan which is expected to be approved for a statutory consultation (over a six week period) in late September 2016 by the Council's Cabinet. Following the consultation period all responses will be collated and submitted to the Secretary of State for the Environment with a view to an Examination in Public being held from September 2017. The target is that the new local plan will be adopted in Spring/Summer 2018.

The site specific criteria set out in the proposed allocation of the site in the emerging local plan states:

- Consider and mitigate against any adverse impacts key features of interest of adjoining local wildlife site (Westmill Lane)
- Site layout designed to take account of waste water infrastructure

Clearly the emerging local plan is still at a relatively early stage however it will start to gather some weight as a material planning consideration following the commencement of the Proposed Submission consultation.

At present the site remains within the Green Belt and any planning application for residential development submitted in advance of the new local plan being adopted and the site excluded from the Green Belt will need to be supported by very special circumstances (VSC's) . In my view the only VSC that could currently be advanced is that the Local Planning Authority does not have a deliverable five year supply of housing land as required by the NPPF. However the nearer the emerging local plan is to adoption the more this can also be relied upon as a VSC – ie. that the site is being supported as a housing site allocation in the emerging local plan.

Amount of development and layout considerations

As stated above the emerging local plan allocation sets a dwelling estimate of 40 units. This estimate was based on the assumption that the existing building would remain. The proposed layout plan envisages 51 dwellings. This amount of development would be broadly in line with a density guideline of 20 dwellings per hectare which has been used to calculate dwelling capacity on new housing allocation sites. That said, the actual number of units is going to be affected by site specific constraints and these are discussed in more detail below.

My main concern with the proposed layout as shown on SK002 is the amount of development within the affordable housing area located at the front of the site. The character of Bedford Road within the vicinity of the site is generally that of well landscaped frontages to the main road comprising largely of trees and mature shrubs and grassed verges with built development set back from the road frontage. It is understood that once a housing site the appearance of the site frontage will change in order to provide the necessary access and associated visibility splays. However, the site is within a semi-rural location and development close up to the site frontage, particularly with the affordable housing portion of the site, will detract from the character of this part of Bedford Road.



Drawing SK002 has been tabled at the meeting on 25th August 2016 as an updated layout version of the original plan submitted with this pre-application submission (drawing SK.01).

It is noted that the separate affordable housing access has been deleted with only one main access into the site. Whilst this is welcome the affordable housing area has been reduced, the number of units increased and built development brought much closer to the Bedford Road boundary. The L-shaped block at the front of the site (presumably a two storey flatted block) would provide a continuous built up corner block which I consider at odds with the prevailing character of the area and establish an incongruously urban form of development. It would also detract from the entrance to what otherwise has potential to be an attractive residential scheme.

In terms of the layout of the affordable units I would have some reservations over the potential for overlooking of the rear garden of Plot 51 of the market housing.

I would recommend that Plot 51 is deleted and the affordable housing scheme pushed back from the site frontage. I would recommend that the L-shaped block is either deleted or reduced in size to facilitate a less built up approach into the site and a more compatible form of development with the surroundings. Additional landscaping should be provided along the site frontage between the affordable units and the road which will provide both a visual and acoustic barrier to the Bedford Road. The above suggested amendments may reduce the number of affordable housing units below the required 40% target and therefore some consideration will need to be given to perhaps deleting more of the open market units to achieve the affordable housing target.

The dwellings shown on Plots 44 – 49 are very close to the highway boundary. It is suggested that these units are set back further or some staggering of the dwellings is proposed in order to break up the uniformity of the scheme here and provide more defensible space in front of these dwellings.

It is noted that the market housing comprise 100% detached dwellings. Whilst it is acknowledged that the affordable housing area provides for smaller units it is suggested that a greater variety of dwelling sizes is provided for the market houses – perhaps some semi-detached or small terrace units. Houses with dormer windows or second stories should be avoided in this location.

All of the garages within the scheme should be 7 metres in depth and 3 metres wide (measured internally) (6 metres if double garage) to count as a parking space (to comply with adopted Parking Supplementary Planning Guidance).

The amount of visitor parking spaces should be increased in line with SPD standards. It is suggested that these spaces could be dispersed around the site e.g. some at the front adjacent the affordable housing and several linear parking bays off the access road e.g. adjacent plots 25, 30, 32 and 33.

It appears that some parts of the site contain shared surfaces – this is welcomed and should be delineated with contrasting surfacing material.

Generally, with the exception of the affordable housing element the layout shown on SK002 is largely acceptable. The provision of the central green with the potential to accommodate an informal Local Area for Play (LAP) is welcome. Landscaping along the site boundaries may need to be reinforced in parts. As discussed at the pre-application meeting the site does not fall within a Policy 21 area (Landscape and Open Space Patterns in Towns). I attach a copy extract of the local plan proposals map (Policy 21 area shaded in green).

Flooding and Drainage

The site lies just outside Flood Zones 2 and 3. A Flood Risk Assessment will be required and the Lead Local Flood Authority will want to see detail on surface water management proposals based on Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUD's) principles.

The site slopes down from north to south and it is anticipated that this will be taken into account in terms of designing surface water drainage and sewage disposal. Regard should be had to what extent of land may be required to accommodate SUD's, including any balancing ponds and pumping station enclosures. It is understood that there is significant existing water infrastructure crossing the site which will need to be designed into the scheme.

In terms of other utilities liaison with National Grid is recommended to determine whether any built infrastructure will be required e.g. sub-stations which may affect the layout.

Highway and access issues

It is noted that single point of access is now proposed. Detailed highway advice should be sought from the Highway Authority who provide a separate chargeable pre-application advice service. Without prejudice to any advice provided by the Highway Authority I am concerned over safe pedestrian access to and from the site and in particular pedestrians crossing to the east side of Bedford Road.



There is no footpath network on the west side of Bedford Road within the vicinity of the site. It is my view that this development, because of its scale and the number of residents, will require the provision of a pedestrian crossing to link with the footpath opposite the site entrance on the east side of Bedford Road. The majority of pedestrians and cyclists will have to cross the A600 to access services including shops and primary school in Ickleford and The Priory Secondary School to the south. Pedestrians will also need to cross and re-cross the A600 to access Oughton Head Nature reserve and other facilities such the nearby Smartys Day Nursery (off Burford Way) due to the lack of a footpath link on the west side of Bedford Road.

It is noted that there is a layby bus stop and shelter on the east side of the A600 but only a poorly sited request stop south of the site just north of the Burford Way junction on the west side. It may be that the development site frontage could accommodate a bus stop layby to serve northbound bus services – subject to all other visibility and other highway safety requirements of the highway authority. Visibility from the site to the north will need to be given particular consideration given the rise in the carriageway and speed of traffic.

It is my view that such footpath, pedestrian crossing and bus stop improvements are desirable if the development is to facilitate sustainable development and contribute to wider sustainability and healthy lifestyle objectives.

The development should be accompanied by a Transport statement that encourages other forms of transport other than the private car.

Waste Management

The development layout should demonstrate that it can properly accommodate waste and recycling collection vehicles currently in operation in addition to emergency service and delivery vehicles. Tracking diagrams will be required as part of the transport statement. Details of the waste storage facilities for individual dwellings are not normally required however in the case of any flats or terraced housing units details of waste storage will be required, including waste storage buildings, in order to demonstrate that wheelie bins etc can be stored in discreet yet easily accessible locations for both residents and waste collection operatives.

I attach some guidance details for waste management produced by the Councils Waste Management team.



Ecological issues

The site falls partly within a County Wildlife Site 11/038 and it is likely that the development will have some impact on flora and fauna. A ecological assessment (to include habitat survey, protected species impact and any mitigation measures) will be required to support any planning application and it is recommended that surveys are carried out as soon as possible and within the appropriate season, in order to inform the ecological impact of the proposals.

Affordable Housing

For information on this issue I attach a copy of the emerging new local plan policy as proposed to be set out in the Proposed Submission Draft - *'Housing and Development Strategy Policy HS2: Affordable Housing'*

I have sought the Council's Housing Supply Officer's detailed comments on this proposal and I can summarise the key points of this advice as follows (this is based on the initially submitted 49 unit scheme):

Comments :

If the principle of residential development on this site is deemed acceptable, including the provision of market housing to facilitate the provision of affordable housing, the council's affordable housing requirement on this site will be 40% in accordance with our emerging Local Plan, evidenced and supported by the 2012 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). Based on 49 dwellings this equates to a total of 20 affordable dwellings.

Within the overall 40% affordable housing requirement a 65%/35% rented/ other tenure split is required, in accordance with the council's Planning Obligations SPD and the 2012 SHMA. Therefore of the overall 20 affordable units: 13 rented units and 7 other/ intermediate tenure units should be provided to meet housing need.

The 2012 SHMA indicates that there is a greater need across the district for smaller affordable homes of both tenures.

Within the 65% rented tenure the following mix best meets housing need:

- 48% x 1 bed flats/houses (6 dwellings)
- 37% x 2 bed houses (5 dwellings)
- 12% x 3 bed houses (2 dwellings)
- 3% x 4 bed + houses. (0 dwelling)



Within the 35% other intermediate tenure the following mix best meets housing need:

24% x 1 bed flats/houses (2 dwellings)

47% x 2 bed houses (3 dwellings)

29% x 3 bed houses (2 dwellings)

Whilst the Council will accept Affordable Rents on one and two bed homes up to a maximum of 80% (including service charges, if appropriate) of market rents, for three bed homes the maximum is 70% (including service charges, if appropriate) to ensure affordability in accordance with the 2012 SHMA and the council's Tenancy Strategy. In addition all affordable rents should be within Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates.

The affordable homes should meet Housing Corporation Design and Quality Standards and should be physically indistinguishable from the market housing.

The applicant's proposals submitted with their request for pre-application advice suggests the site could accommodate approximately 49 dwellings including a mix of detached and terraced dwellings, including an element of affordable housing and Fig 2 illustrates the proposed layout (3.1).

Looking at the indicative site layout in Fig 2, it appears that the applicant is proposing that the affordable housing provision would comprise 11 x terraced houses and a small block of flats in one corner of the site, with separate access from the A600 Bedford Road.

I conclude from this that the proposals provide 8 x one bed flats within the flat block and 11 x two and three bed terrace houses. This is one less dwelling than required. In addition the applicant will need to ensure that the design and layout of the flats are not contained within a single block as this will be an issue for any registered provider; as mixed tenure rented/ shared ownership blocks are not desirable.

If the flats were designed to look like a terrace of houses with individual front doors that may be more acceptable or alternatively a small block of 6 x 1 bed flats for rent and 2 x 1 bed flats (with the outside appearance of a terraced house) or 2 x 1 bed houses for shared ownership sale.

Grant funding for the provision of affordable housing is not available on S106 sites either from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) or the Council and any affordable homes should be delivered through planning gain alone.

The applicant must submit documentary evidence using a recognised financial toolkit to support any viability issues claimed. Any viability claims will be independently appraised/ tested at full cost to the applicant, in accordance with the Council's Planning Obligations SPD.

As Ickleford has a population of 3,000 or less, protected area status applies. Therefore staircasing on any shared ownership properties is restricted to 80% to ensure that the homes remain affordable in perpetuity. Likewise any social rented properties are excluded from the Right to Acquire and the new Right to Buy.

Environmental issues

I have received comments from both the Council's Environmental Health department (contaminated land and air quality officer and environmental noise officer) and I attach these detailed comments for your information. In summary a noise assessment will be required and Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points provided in each property with a garage or dedicated car parking space. With regards to the EV requirement this is considered to be justified having regard to Section 10 of the NPPF and the need for new development to promote renewable and low carbon energy and mitigate against the adverse impact of new development on air quality. In addition emerging local plan design policy D4: 'Air quality' will be used to support the requirement for EV infrastructure.

Section 106

The Local Planning Authority has an adopted Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (2006) which would be relevant to this development. Infrastructure contributions to both District Council and Hertfordshire County Council services could be required (subject to justification by both authorities). The site falls within Ickleford Parish and therefore there may be identified some capacity improvements to Parish Council facilities as a result of this development which may form part of a legal agreement – again subject to justification having regard to the CIL Regulations and paragraph 204 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

In terms of consultation responses on planning obligations I can advise that the County Council's Development Services Team has requested the provision of fire hydrants if adequate hydrants are not available and subject to the detail of a water scheme design.

In terms of sustainable transport it is likely that consideration will be given to improving the local cycle network in addition to public transport improvements.

Procedural matters

In terms of Environmental Impact Assessment, this development is Schedule 2 development as identified within the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011) however it does not exceed the thresholds set out in Schedule 2, Part 10 (b) i.e. the site does not propose more than 150 dwellings and the overall area of the development does not exceed 5 hectares. As such I do not consider that a Screening Opinion under Part 2 of the Regulations is required as the development does not exceed the thresholds over which the environmental impact of the development should be examined and it is unlikely that the development will have significant environmental impact in my opinion. An Environmental Statement will not be required to accompany any planning application in my opinion.

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The site is within the Green Belt and this designation will remain until the new local plan is adopted. If the Local Planning Authority is asked to determine an application for planning permission in advance of the new local plan being adopted based on the proposed layout as indicated on drawing SK002 and is minded to grant permission, the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009 will apply. In particular the LPA will need to take a view on whether the development would, *'by reason of its scale or nature or location, would have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt'* (Section 4 (b) of the Direction). If the view is that the development will have a significant impact then the application would have to be referred to the Secretary of State in accordance with the provisions of 9 – 12 of the direction.

Summary

In summary, I would advise you that in my opinion there would be no objection to the residential development of the site given the emerging local plan allocation subject to the forthcoming consultation period not resulting in any unresolvable objections from statutory consultees in particular. It is hoped the above comments on the layout drawing are of some assistance in developing the scheme further. Further comments can be provided as the scheme evolves prior to the submission of any planning application.

I hope you find the comments above useful. To reiterate, the views of planning officers do not constitute a formal determination but are intended to help in the process of promoting acceptable standards of development. The comments provided above are given on the basis of the information submitted and as the professional opinion of officers of the Council and are not binding on any formal decision of the Local Planning Authority.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Rea', written over a faint, light-colored background graphic.

Tom Rea
Area Planning Officer

