

**Application No:** 13/1418C

**Location:** Land at THE GREEN, MIDDLEWICH

**Proposal:** Substitution of house types, at increase from 22 dwellings to 39 dwellings on the north west part of the site

The application has been recommended for refusal on 4 grounds. As expected, amended plans have been received to resolve those issues. This now reduces the number of dwellings to 36.

These are addressed in turn below:

### **Impact on Trees**

As initially submitted there was concern that the development would encroach into the Root Protection Area (RPA) of several trees on the northern boundary and that the crowns of the trees will encroach some distance over several plots.

British Standard 5857:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations' advises that the default position should be that structures are located outside the RPAs of trees to be retained. The BS also makes reference to the relationship between buildings and large trees and the apprehension caused to occupiers which can in the long term lead to pressure to prune or remove trees.

However, an amended layout has now been submitted, which shows the properties on the northern boundary moved away from the trees, so that they are now sited outside the RPA and their rear elevations now stand on the same building line as the previously approved scheme. In the light of this amendment it is now considered that the impact of the scheme on mature trees would not be materially greater than the approved scheme and therefore the first reason for refusal no longer stands.

### **3-Storey Development**

The main report expressed concerns that two of the new proposed house types, the "Mossley" and "Soutar" included accommodation within the roof space, and were 9m and 9.5m in overall height respectively, which was significantly greater than the 2 storey dwellings on the remainder of the development and within the surrounding area which are all around 7.5m in overall height.

This disparity would have been more noticeable given that some of the three storey units were proposed on the boundary with existing development. Furthermore, the height of the 3 storey units on plots, which are already impacted by trees, as detailed above, will exacerbate the extent of overshadowing and over-domination.

The amended plans have responded to this by removing the “Mossley” house type from the scheme altogether and the number of “Soutar” units have been reduced substantially to three. These are located within the middle of the site, and are located well away from the boundaries with existing development and the trees to the north of the site.

Therefore, although the three storey development has not been eliminated entirely, it is considered to be much more acceptable in terms of the amount and location, and, on balance, it is no longer considered that a refusal on these grounds could be sustained.

### **Car Dominated Frontage**

Another concern with the scheme as initially submitted was that the increase in the density has resulted in the majority of plots now having frontage parking on both sides of the road. This would create the impression of a car dominated frontage which would detract from the character and appearance of the proposed street scene. This has been addressed through a reduction in the number of units proposed by 3. This has not only reduced the number of parking spaces required, but has also created more space within the development to allow frontage parking to be moved to the side of the dwellings on a number of plots. This has in turn increased the amount of landscaping which can be provided to front garden areas, in order to break up the remaining elements of frontage parking.

This is considered to be much more acceptable in urban design terms and has addressed the third reason for refusal.

### **Separation Distances and Garden Areas**

The main report expressed concerns that the separation distance between the rear of plots 48 to 51 and plots 25 to 27, would fail to meet the required 21.3m. This was particularly problematic given that plots 48 to 51 are 3 storey developments. Also the separation between the rear of plots 43 to 45 and the gable of plot 28, is only 10m rather than 13.7 as advocated by the standard

Whilst the separation distances in both these locations remain the same on the amended plans, the elimination of one of the plots from each block has reduced the number of dwellings subject to reduced separation distances from 7 to 4 and the plots in question are now two storey rather than three storey properties, which has helped to mitigate the shortfall in the separation distance. In this respect the scheme is now comparable to the approved layout, which also included 4 no. 2 storey plots in these locations with reduced separation distances and therefore it is not considered that a reason for refusal on this basis could be sustained.

The Councils SPG advocates the provision of 65sq.m of private amenity space for all new family dwellings. The main report expressed concern that a number of plots failed to achieve this standard. In particular the three storey plots, which are clearly family houses, will have approximately 40 to 45sq of

amenity space, which is considered to be unsatisfactory. The submitted amendments, and in particular the removal of the majority of the three storey units, and the reduction in the number of dwellings, has allowed garden areas to be increased, so that the minimum garden area is now approximately 45sq.m.

Whilst the proposal fails to meet all the requirements of the Council's SPG and Policy GR6 of the adopted Local Plan, these failings are far less significant as a result of the submission of amended plans. Furthermore, the provision of an adequate standard of amenity for future residents must be balanced against the need to make the best use of land and the proposed increase in the number of properties to be built on this site will contribute to the Council's housing land supply and will ease pressure to develop other Greenfield and open countryside sites within the Borough.

The solution which has now been negotiated culminating in the submission of the amended plans are considered to be represent an appropriate balance between residential amenity and making best use of the site and on this basis it is considered that the 4<sup>th</sup> reason for refusal has been adequately addressed.

### **Open Space**

At the time the main report was prepared figures relating to commuted sum payments in lieu of on-site provision of public open space were awaited from the Council's Greenspaces department. These have now been received, and for the whole site, including both the replanned and previously approved parts of the application site, these equate to:

- £26,850.53 for children's playspace
- £6973.56 for amenity greenspace

Taking into account the reduction in the number of dwellings by 3 from the amended plans referred to above, on a pro-rata basis, these figures would be as follows:

- £25,853.52 for children's playspace
- £5,742.93 for amenity greenspace

The Greenspaces Officer's has confirmed acceptance of these figures. The money would be spent in accordance with the Council's interim policy within 800m of the development site'

### **Education**

The education contribution will also need to be recalculated on the basis of the reduced numbers. The education officer has been asked for a figure and a verbal update will be provided at the Committee meeting.

### **Affordable Housing**

The reduction in the number of units has also impacted on affordable housing provision, and the Housing Officer has stated that as the total number of units on the site has reduced to 77, the requirement for 30% affordable housing equates to 23 units, with the tenure split required being 65% social/affordable rent and 35% intermediate units, which equates to a requirement for 15 rented and 8 intermediate dwellings.

The affordable housing on the original application for the site was secured as 12 rented and 7 intermediate dwellings meeting the tenure split required of 65/35 between rent/intermediate. The developer has confirmed that on the re-plan area they are proposing a 50/50 split between rented and intermediate affordable dwellings. Overall this would provide a total of 14 rented affordable dwellings on the site & 9 intermediate dwellings, which equates to 60% social/affordable rented and 40% intermediate dwellings. Although this does not quite meet the 65/35 split identified in IPS: Affordable Housing, Housing Officers consider that it is satisfactory, as the provision of the 2 social/affordable rented dwellings and 2 intermediate dwellings as part of the re-plan makes sense in terms of management implications for a Registered Provider given that the 2 rented are in one block and 2 intermediate in another.

## **CONCLUSION**

The submission of the amended plans has overcome all of the reasons for refusal as set out in the main report. Accordingly the scheme is recommended for approval subject to a Section 106 Agreement to secure the relevant affordable housing, education contributions and public open space requirements.

## **AMENDED RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE** subject to Deed of Variation to the existing Section 106 Agreement to bind the whole site and secure:

- **Affordable housing comprising 14 rented affordable dwellings on the site & 9 intermediate dwellings across the whole site**
- **£25,853.52 for children's playspace**
- **£5,742.93 for amenity greenspace**
- **POS contributions to be spent in accordance with the Council's interim policy within 800m of the development site'**
- **Provision for a local residents management company to maintain the on-site amenity space**
- **Education Contribution (Amount TBC)**

**And the following conditions:**

- 1. Time Limit**
- 2. Approved Plans**
- 3. Remove permitted development rights**

- 4. Submission / Approval of Contaminated Land Investigation / Mitigation**
- 5. Submission / Approval of Details of External Lighting**
- 6. Hours of construction to be restricted to 08:00 to 18:00 hours on Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 14:00 hours on Saturday, with no work at any other time including Sundays and Public Holidays**
- 7. Submission / Approval of details of any piling**
- 8. Submission / Approval of bin storage**
- 9. Submission / Approval of scheme to manage overland flow**
- 10. Submission / Approval of scheme to limit surface water runoff**
- 11. Surface water discharge to mimic that of the existing site**
- 12. Submission / Approval of detail of Sustainable Urban Drainage**
- 13. Only foul water to be connected to sewer**
- 14. Details of bat and bird nest boxes**
- 15. Submission / Approval of Landscaping**
- 16. Implementation of Landscaping**
- 17. Submission / Approval of Tree protection**
- 18. Implementation of Tree Protection**
- 19. No works to take place during nesting season without submission / approval of bird survey**
- 20. Enhancement of existing hedgerows**
- 21. Development to take place in accordance with Great Crested new mitigation measures**
- 22. Submission / Approval of materials**
- 23. Submission / Approval of road construction details**
- 24. Provision of car parking**
- 25. Submission / Approval of details of boundary treatment**
- 26. Submission / Approval of construction management plan**

**Application No:** 13/1210C

**Location:** LAND OFF, CREWE ROAD, ALSAGER

**Proposal:** Reserved Matters planning application to erect 65No. Dwellings with associated Highway and External Works

### **Public Open Space**

As stated in the main report, the Greenspaces Officer had requested details of the design and choice of equipment in the proposed play area. The developer has pointed out that that condition 35 of the outline permission requires these details to be submitted as part of the Reserved Matters application but they have not had sufficient time to prepare this information and have requested that an additional condition be added to the Reserved Matters approval requiring this to be submitted prior to commencement of development. This is considered to be acceptable.

Concern was expressed that the position of the path which is indicated on the site layout plan does not follow a desire line from the new housing area to the play area. Although an amended landscaping plan has been submitted, this remains the case. However, a condition can be applied to require an amended route for the path to be submitted and agreed.

The revised landscaping contains details of landscaping and low level planting to the POS and the LEAP. The Landscape Officer has expressed the view that proposals for the area around the POS need amendment to be less ornamental. (Subject to consultation with the Greenspaces officer.) However, amended landscaping details can be secured by condition. The Greenspaces officer has also commented that the area around the LEAP needs to be labelled on the plan as Amenity Grass and maintained as such. This could also form part of an amended plan submitted pursuant to such a condition.

The Public Rights of Way Officer commented that the plans should include detail of signage and surfacing for the proposed footpaths within the site. The developer has stated that the proposed surfacing will be a black ash. It is considered that this would be inappropriate for wheelchairs, children's pushchairs and bikes and is not therefore acceptable. However, an alternative material can be secured by condition. No details of signage appear to have been submitted, but this can also be conditioned.

### **Landscape**

In respect of the original submission, the Landscape Officer expressed concerns regarding the absence of sections and details of the proposed retaining wall. The impact of levels changes on the copse area, Valley Brook watercourse and protected trees was unclear. It was also not clear how the footpath link to the south of the site negotiates the retaining wall and further details were required.

Although amended plans have been submitted, there is still an absence of sections and details of the proposed retaining wall and the impact of levels changes remains unclear. It is also not clear how the footpath link to the south of the site negotiates the retaining wall. Further details will be required by condition.

With regard to boundary treatment, there is an existing boundary hedgerow to the western boundary. The hedge must be retained and it was considered that a 1.8m fence is not necessary or appropriate for plots 1,9,10,11,12,13. Although the plans now show a lower fence, which would be installed on the inside of the existing hedge it is considered that this would make it difficult for residents to maintain the hedge which could lead to its' deterioration and possible removal. This would be to the detriment of the street scene when viewed from Crewe Road and the lane to the west of the site leading to the Mill public house. Therefore an amended scheme of boundary treatment should also be secured by condition.

The scheme provided very limited enhancement for the waterside woodland or pond areas. However, in the absence of any objection from the Council's Ecologist, it is not considered that a refusal on these grounds could be sustained.

The draft landscape management plan, which has now been submitted appears to be reasonable. However, this covers both the main site and POS landscape scheme plans and so will need amending if amendments are sought to the landscaping plan for the POS as described above. This can also form a condition of any approval.

## **Trees**

The main report stated that the following additional arboricultural information was required prior to determination of the application:

- Tree protection plan overlaid on site layout with areas. Clear identification of areas where special construction required.
- Protection measures provided for hedgerows.
- Arboricultural Method Statement amended to cover hard surfacing in vicinity of trees on Crewe Road frontage ( on Crewe road side and internal access road ) and to include contact details for relevant personnel
- Details of Service routes & method statement if impacting on tree Root Protection Areas (RPA's).

Additional information has been provided, which the Landscape Officer considered to be generally acceptable. However, she has commented that the Arboricultural Method (AMS) statement will need amending to include contact details for relevant personnel and specific instruction that the arboriculturalist will supervise all works in the RPAs. The tree protection plan will need amending to include protection for hedgerows, trees on the Crewe Road

frontage and a braced fence specification ( as identified in the AMS). Details of service routes are also outstanding at present.

However, there is no requirement to provide these details at this stage as conditions on the outline permission state that they to be submitted prior to commencement of development on the site rather than with the reserved matters application.

## **Ecology**

As stated in the main report, the Council's ecologist has requested an updated badger survey and confirmation as to whether it will be necessary to remove any trees to avoid the shading of the new pond. These details have now been received and he has commented as follows:

### **Badgers**

The extent of badger activity remains unchanged since outline consent was granted and so no additional mitigation/compensation is required. However, he recommends a condition to ensure that the proposed mitigation measures are implemented.

### **Breeding birds**

Conditions are also required to safeguard breeding birds and ensure some additional provision is made for breeding birds and roosting bats.

### **Copse Area**

The developer has confirmed that the on-site pond can be enhanced without the requirement to remove any trees within the copse area and the ecologist has confirmed that this is acceptable.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is considered that the package of revised plans and additional information that has been submitted has overcome all of the queries and concerns raised in the main report in respect of design, layout, landscaping and highways considerations. Accordingly the application is recommended for approval.

## **AMENDED RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE** subject to the following conditions:

1. **Standard**
2. **Approved plans**
3. **Materials**
4. **Revised scheme of Landscaping to the POS**
5. **Landscape implementation**
6. **Submission of updated landscape management plan**
7. **Scheme to provide compensatory flood storage**



- 8. Submission of results of 1D hydraulic model of Valley Brook.**
- 9. Development to proceed in accordance with the submitted Great Crested Newt Mitigation Strategy**
- 10. Submission of Specification for LEAP**
- 11. No works to commence within nesting season without a bat and breeding bird survey**
- 12. Development to take place in accordance with submitted badger mitigation**
- 13. Submission of details of nesting boxes for bats and birds**
- 14. Submission of levels, sections and details of the proposed retaining wall. Details to include how the footpath link to the south of the site negotiates the retaining wall.**
- 15. Amended plan to show the proposed footpath link to the Leap following a natural desire line.**
- 16. Submission of revised details of the proposed footpath surface**
- 17. No approval for fence to western boundary – hedge to be retained.**
- 18. Submission of details of signage to footpath**

**APPLICATION NO:** 13/1559C

**LOCATION:** Land East of School Lane, Sandbach.

**PROPOSAL:** Outline application for 13 residential dwellings, associated infrastructure facilities.

### **APPLICANTS SUBMISSION**

The agent for the application has reviewed the report and made the following comments:

- Concerns that the Council would not defer the application until the July committee
- The highways response was not available on the website until 10<sup>th</sup> June, well out of the expected response time, therefore disadvantaging the applicant as this issue could have been addressed
- The issue of noise can be addressed
- Lack of access to internal responses
- Lack of policy information in the body of the report
- The Council has not demonstrated that it has a five year housing land supply
- Issues with affordable housing provision

**The recommendation remains the same.**

**APPLICATION NO: 13/0580C**

**LOCATION: Woodside Golf Club, Knutsford Road, Cranage,**

**PROPOSAL: Creation of 27 bed hotel, 6 garden suites with minor  
modifications to golf course, construction of 7  
dwellings with community leisure facilities**

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

A letter of support has been submitted by Fiona Bruce MP.

**The recommendation remains the same.**

**Application No:** 13/1215C

**Location:** LAND SOUTH OF HIND HEATH ROAD, SANDBACH,  
CHESHIRE

**Proposal:** Reserved Matters Application for 10/2608C for the  
Appearance, Landscaping, Layout & Scale for Phase 1 to  
Include 68 Dwellings

### **Highways**

The Strategic Highways Manager raised a number of minor issues with the internal layout that required revisions to be made. These were:

- Where entering shared-use areas, footways must continue past the entrance block-paving demarker
- Turning heads on cul-de-sacs on western boundary need to accommodate refuse vehicles, so would require 6m radii (or confirmation through swept paths that acceptable)
- Footways sharply kinked in alignment and need to follow desire lines

Amended drawings have been received and he has confirmed that the highway matters relate solely to the layout and standard of the internal site road layout and parking provision. The main spine road will be 5.5m carriageway plus two 2-metre footways, which meets the Council's design standards and the principles in Manual for Streets. The layout has been amended slightly to meet my requirements. The provision and location of parking also meet my requirements. Accordingly he has no objection to the proposal.

### **Design and Layout**

The Council's Principal Urban Design Officer had examined the application and had raised a number of concerns and queries which the applicants stated would be addressed through the submission of a package of amended plans and additional information. These have now been received and the various concerns are considered below.

#### ***Design Statement & Elevational Detailing***

In response to feedback from the Principal Design Officer, the developer had agreed to make a number of improvements and modifications to the elevational detailing of the proposed dwellings, and, in particular, the apartment block, and to provide Design Statement, to demonstrate how this detailing is relevant, has been determined by the landscape, and reflects local characteristics.

The amended plans and the accompanying Design Statement have now been received. In summary, the statement explains that the proposed dwelling styles have been carefully designed to reflect the good principles within the

vicinity of Hind Heath Road and the immediate vicinity. Two character areas have been created within the scheme.

The **Town Area** has a formal feel with all dwellings having consistent elevational detailing. The area displays a higher density with units being predominantly semi detached, mews and apartments. Window styles are 'mock sash' and 'horizontal bar' with the main elevations being predominantly brick. Steeply pitched roofs with some hips give a very traditional urban appearance.

Dwellings within the Town Area are formally arranged in blocks with a rigid approach to addressing corners and key plots. The layout is designed to break down long runs of road with changes to alignment and surfaces, thus reducing vehicle speeds. Changes in alignment provide opportunities for focal buildings at junctions and corners.

The **Country Edge** is more informal with dwellings being either semi detached or detached. The density is lower and the elevational appearance is brick with feature tile hanging to key plots. Window styles are 'cottage', again steeply pitched roofs and simple design gives a feeling of suburban / rural development.

Dwellings within the Country Edge generally have larger footprints with more space between the blocks. Parking and garaging is pushed well back and private drives kept tight to the building frontages. The dwellings are served from culs de sac and private drives and are informal in surfacing and design.

The proposed materials have been carefully selected to respond to the existing housing developments within the immediate vicinity and reflect the architectural styles within the 'Country Edge' and 'Town' character areas.

Variation and individuality has been achieved by using a variety and mix of house types within both areas. The use of 2 storey dwellings of varying depths and styles has created a varied roof scape and an interesting street scene. As a result, groups of similar materials have been used in order to give specific areas their own identity.

Generally the architectural styles of the proposed properties within the country edge are intended to be simple, consisting of brick facades with brick detailing. Windows are 'cottage' style and incidental tile hanging has been used to break up larger gables and add individuality.

The architectural styles of the proposed properties within the town area are intended to be a more formal 'regency' style, again with brick detailing but with render to key or focal plots.

In the light of the additional information that has been submitted, it is considered that the design approach which has been adopted has been fully justified and is acceptable.

Principal Design Officer had particular concerns regarding the elevational treatment of focal point buildings, and the apartment building in particular. This has been addressed through the creation of a more formalised elevation, which includes elements of render, stone quoin blocks to the corners, and deeper windows to create a statement building and help to generate a sense of place within the square on which it is to be situated.

Overall, it is considered that the approach which has now been adopted to the elevational treatment of the scheme has addressed the previous concerns and has been fully justified through the design statement.

### ***Route to Canal***

He had also expressed concerns that the route linking through the site to the landscape to the edge of the canal was one of the strengths of the scheme but that seemed have been weakened and has become more standardised. However, this element lies outside the application site and within the indicative layout for Phase II of the development. Therefore, it is a matter which can be addressed when the reserved matters application for that phase is submitted.

### ***Frontage Parking***

With regard to the concerns about frontage parking, this has been addressed through a reduction in the number of units proposed by one (Plot 41 has been omitted). This has not only reduced the number of parking spaces required, but has also created more space within the development to allow frontage parking to be moved to the side of the dwellings on a number of plots. This has in turn increased the amount of landscaping which can be provided to front garden areas, in order to break up the remaining elements of frontage parking such that parking is provided in blocks of no more than 2 spaces immediately adjoining each other. Furthermore, the revised plans show additional landscaping to the streets, which introduce further tree planting and helps to break up the elements of parking.

This is considered to be much more acceptable in urban design terms and has addressed the concerns expressed by the Principal Urban Design Officer.

### ***Building For Life 12***

Principal Design Officer also requested that a Building for Life 12 (BfL12) assessment be submitted for the proposal. This has now been received. BfL12 comprises of 12 questions, with four questions in each chapter:

- Integrating into the neighbourhood
- Creating a place
- Street and home

Based on a simple 'traffic light' system (red, amber and green) new development should:

- Secure as many 'greens' as possible,
- Minimise the number of 'ambers' and;
- Avoid 'reds'.

The more 'greens' the better a development will be. A red light gives warning that an aspect of a development needs to be reconsidered. A development proposal might not achieve 12 greens for a variety of reasons. Where a proposal is identified as having one or more 'ambers', which would point to the need to rethink whether these elements can be improved, local circumstances may justify why the scheme cannot meet the higher standard expected of a green.

In this case, however, the assessment indicates that the proposal scores "green" against all of the 12 criteria.

### ***Sustainable Design***

There was nothing within the application that explained how the scheme performs in terms of sustainable design. However, the submitted Design Statement has rectified this and explains that:-

- *The Energy Saving Trust EST report "Fabric First" October 2010, states that there seems to be a likely held belief in the house building industry that to achieve reductions in CO2 emissions of the order of 25% it will be necessary to use a form of micro generation technology such as solar thermal hot water or heat pumps. Taking a fabric first and improved services approach can be a viable option.*
- *Optimising the performance of the fabric first limits the need to add micro generation technology. By taking the fabric first approach the designs are essentially being future proofed.*
- *This approach typically includes the following:*
  - *Walls – enhanced U –Values by increasing the size of the cavity wall construction and increasing the insulation*
  - *Roof – Enhanced U – Values by increasing the thickness of the insulation*
  - *Floors – High performance insulated ground floors provided enhance U –Values performance*
  - *Windows and Doors – high performance glazing is provided to improve U- Values*
  - *Thermal Bridging - Thermal bridging heat losses are reduced by detailing and enhanced construction detail*
  - *Air tightness – Building Regulations AD L1A 2006 requires a maximum air leakage rate of 10m<sup>3</sup>/m<sup>2</sup>/h at 50pa*
  - *Ventilation – With the foregoing excellent air tightness performance, appropriate ventilation will be provided in accordance with Building Regulations. Mechanical ventilation and head Reducing (MVHR) is a method of providing this ventilation.*

- *In summary the developer needs to ensure compliance with the minimum code level required by the Building Regulations in the Code for Sustainable Homes and this will be achieved within the building fabric*
- *It is proposed to provide rainwater butts to 40% of the properties in the interests of recycling rainwater for gardening / vehicle washing purposes*
- *It is proposed to provide cycle storage to 40% of the properties in the interests of discouraging car use and making it easier for people to use sustainable forms of transport*
- *It is proposed to provide half flush W.C. cisterns and low water consultation sanitary wares in order to reduce the amount of water consumed within each dwelling*

In this light of this information it is considered that the developer has demonstrated that the development is as sustainable as possible in terms of its design and has met this crucial aspect of the NPPF.

### **Trees and Landscape**

With regard to the comments in respect of the landscaping of swale area and western buffer, an amended landscape plan has been submitted and the Senior Landscape Officer has confirmed that these have taken into account the comments previously made and are now acceptable.

The Principal Urban Design officer had expressed concern about hedging proposed directly in front of houses, instead of on property boundaries between front gardens and the highway. This has now been rectified via the amended plans.

### **Affordable Housing**

The reduction in the number of units by one has the potential to impact affordable housing provision within the site. However, the Council's Housing Officer has been consulted and he has commented that the Unilateral Undertaking dated 25/02/2011 from the outline application requires that 40% of the total dwellings are provided as affordable, comprising 50% social rented and 50% intermediate dwellings.

Based on the total proposed dwellings on the site being 269, this equates to a requirement for 108 affordable dwellings, with 54 provided as social rent and 54 provided as intermediate tenure dwellings.

The site plan shows a total of 72 dwellings on phase 1 (including the show houses) of which 34 are affordable. This represents 47% of the first phase and therefore, housing officers no objection to the number of affordable dwellings proposed. Based on the numbers of properties on the outline application this will leave a requirement for 74 affordable dwellings across the subsequent phases.



The site plan identifies 20 of the affordable dwellings as shared ownership/intermediate tenure dwellings and 14 dwellings as social rented. Although this does not represent a 50/50 split between social rent and intermediate dwellings on this phase, housing officers, have no objection to it provided that the overall tenure split on the site meets the requirement of the Unilateral Undertaking. Following the development of this phase the remaining requirement will be for 40 social rented dwellings and 34 intermediate dwellings.

The UU requires the Intermediate dwellings to be provided as 48 x 2 bed houses, 4 x 3 bed houses & 2 x 4 bed houses and the Social rented dwellings to be 16 x 1 bed flats, 8 x 2 bed flats, 15 x 2 bed houses, 12 x 3 bed houses & 3 x 4 bed houses.

The site plan shows 8 x 2 bed flats, 1 x 1 bed flat, 2 x 2 bed houses and 1 x 3 bed house as social rented. These properties go towards some of the required social rented dwellings required. The plan also shows 18 x 2 bed houses and 2 x 3 bed houses as intermediate dwellings and again these go towards some of the required intermediate tenure dwellings.

Following the development of this phase the affordable housing which will remain to be provided on the site will be 30 x 2 bed houses, 2 x 3 bed houses and 2 x 4 bed houses as intermediate tenure dwellings and 15 x 1 bed flats, 13 x 2 bed houses, 11 x 3 bed houses and 1 x 4 bed house as social rented.

The UU also states that the affordable homes will be built to comply with the Homes & Communities Agency Design & Quality Standards 2007, Code For Sustainable Homes Level 3, Housing Quality Indicators v.4 and have at least the following minimum gross internal floor areas:

- 1 bed 2 person flats – 45m<sup>2</sup>,
- 2 bed 3 person flats – 57m<sup>2</sup>,
- 2 bed 4 person houses – 67m<sup>2</sup>,
- 3 bed 5 person houses – 82m<sup>2</sup>,
- 4 bed 6 person houses – 95m<sup>2</sup>.

Bovis have advised that the property sizes are as follows:

- S241 (2 bed houses) - 764sqft (71sqm)
- S351 (3 bed houses) - 890 sqft (83sqm)
- S461 (4 bed houses) -1149sqft (107sqm)
- AF17 (flats) - 650sqft (60sqm) this applies to both the 1 and 2 bed version

These all meet the minimum sizes required for each property type, in addition Bovis have also confirmed that they will provide the affordable homes to meet all the current HCA Design and Quality Standards. Consequently, housing officers do not have any objection to this application as amended.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is considered that the package of revised plans and additional information that has been submitted has overcome all of the queries and concerns raised in the main report in respect of design, layout, landscaping and highways considerations. Accordingly the application is recommended for approval.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE as per main report**

**APPLICATION NO: 13/1305N**

**LOCATION: LAND AT CLOSE LANE ALSAGER**

**PROPOSAL: Outline application for a mixed scheme to provide affordable, open market and over 55s sheltered accommodation, open space and new access off Close Lane (76 family dwellings and 56 dwellings for over 55s)**

### **APPLICANTS SUBMISSION**

The applicant has challenged some of the sustainability criteria listed and advises that a PROW adjoins the site, a post box is 500m away and the nearest bus stop is 145m from the site. These would fit the Checklist Criteria in their opinion. The Applicant has asked for their letter to be appended to this update. (Attached below)

They consider Officers to be inconsistent in their assessments of sustainability criteria and quote various sites (e.g. the recent application at Dunnocksfold Road's sustainability assessment) which they consider to be worse than this site in terms of the checklist criteria that have been approved or are recommended for approval by Officers.

### **OFFICERS COMMENT**

The Applicants comments are noted, however, this site remains to be considered to be unsustainably located. Locational factors and the carbon footprint associated with car borne travel are one of the most important and probably the most obvious aspects of sustainability. The bus serves Close Lane outside of peak times six days a week. Close lane is a narrow road with limited pavements. The bus service on Close lane runs 6 days a week outside peak hours. It is therefore unlikely to provide any service for people on this site who need to get around in peak times or on Sunday. Crewe Road has a bus stop close to the junction with Close Lane which has peak hours service. The Crewe Road bus stop is circa 960m from the development site (the checklist advises 500m distance being an acceptable distance to walk to get to a bus stop). In terms of the checklist, this is 96% above the recommended distance, a significant failure.

### **ADDENDUM**

Page 176 – Agricultural Land

States

**‘..Given that only a very limited amount of grade 2 land is involved and that Inspectors have previously attached only very limited weight to the matter of agricultural land, it is not considered that an additional reason for refusal on these grounds could be substantiated. ..’**

However, the presence of best and most versatile agricultural land attests to the high environmental quality of any site and the agricultural status has to be taken into account alongside other sustainability considerations in terms of the core principles of the NPPF as important material considerations in this case.

Where significant development of agricultural land is unavoidable, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of lower grade agricultural land other than where this would be inconsistent with sustainability considerations. Whilst much of the land in the fertile Cheshire Plain is of similar quality and Inspectors have been giving the loss of agricultural land neutral weight in their determinations where there has been no demonstration of a 5 year housing land supply.

In this instance, as an important material consideration, given that there is no over-riding need for the appeal proposals in terms of the Housing Land Supply, given that the Council can demonstrate the 5 year housing land supply plus buffer, it is considered that there are no overriding reasons for allowing the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land .

### **Recommendation**

It is necessary to add policy NE 12 (Agricultural Land Quality) to the reason for refusal for completeness sake.

1. Due to the location of the site, the proposal is considered to be unsustainable development site for residential purposes and comprises the loss of agricultural land within the open countryside. It is therefore contrary to Policy NE.2 (Open Countryside) NE 12 (Agricultural Land Quality) and Policy RES.5 (Housing in the Open Countryside) of the Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan) and the provisions of the NPPF with respect to unsustainable development. In addition, the Local Planning Authority can demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing land supply in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, and as such the application is also premature to the emerging Development Strategy. Consequently, there are no material circumstances to indicate that permission should be granted contrary to the development plan.

