

Application No: 17/0931N

Location: LAND TO THE WEST OF CLOSE LANE, ALSAGER

Proposal: Reserved Matters Application for the erection of 26 dwellings comprising of 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 bedroom homes and associated works following outline 15/5654N

Applicant: Mrs Sutton, Stewart Milne Homes

Expiry Date: 06-Jul-2017

SUMMARY:

The principle of development has already been accepted as part of the outline approval on this site. The weighting of material planning issues within the planning balance is an exercise previously undertaken by the Inspector. Another Inspector accepted the reduction in numbers of units for the over 55's from 56 no. to 6 no. when permission was granted to vary the over 55's condition imposed on the original outline 13/1305N.

This assessment is therefore limited to the matters of detailed design, layout and landscaping previously reserved, however, the scheme is considered to contribute to the 3 strands of sustainability in the NPPF in the following ways:

Social Sustainability

The development will not have a detrimental impact upon residential amenity, it would provide benefits in terms of 30% affordable housing provision and would help in the Councils delivery of 5 year housing land supply. The impact upon infrastructure would be neutral as the education mitigation was achieved as part of the recent permission to vary the numbers of over 55's units. The provision of public open space and the proposed play area utilises the areas allocated for such uses as part of phase 1 and complies with the parameters of the outline scheme.

Environmental Sustainability

The design, layout and landscaping of the scheme are considered to be of sufficient quality.

A total of 26 conditions are imposed on the outline permission which address environmental concerns such as ecology, drainage and flood risk issues, trees, amenity, external lighting, travel planning and electric vehicle infrastructure amongst others. The Inspector considered the impact to be acceptable subject to these conditions, which do not need to be repeated as part of reserved matters.

The proposed access point to Close lane was determined at appeal to be acceptable and the traffic impact as part of this development has already been accepted together with highway works on Close Lane via a S78 agreement pursuant to the Highways Act.

The internal design of the highway layout/parking provision is acceptable to the Head of Strategic Infrastructure (Highways).

Economic Sustainability

The proposal will contribute to the local economy by virtue of the increased spending power of new residents and the construction supply chain.

RECOMMENDATION: Approve subject to conditions

PROPOSAL:

Reserved matters approval is sought for 26 dwellings (phase 2) a mixed residential scheme to provide 6 affordable bungalows and 20 family sized dwellings, 2 of which are affordable units.

The proposal shares the same design principles as the existing Stewart Milne development adjoining.

SITE DESCRIPTION:

The application site is located to the west of Alsager, adjoining the existing settlement boundary of Alsager. The site however is located in the Haslington ward and is covered by the Crewe and Nantwich Borough Local Plan, the boundary of Alsager being Close Lane. However, it is considered that the site is most closely related to the Alsager settlement and that possible residents of the site would utilise services and facilities within the Alsager area. The eastern side of Close Lane features mixed 1960's onwards bungalow and housing development of Alsager.

The first phase of a housing development comprising 74 units is currently being built by the Applicant, Stewart Milne Homes. Land to the immediate west of the site at Yew Tree Farm and has recently been granted outline permission at appeal. Reserved matters have been granted for 40 units (12 units of which are affordable).

This application concerns the 2 sections of the original site which are left for the over 55 units as previously required by 13/1305N and subsequently amended by the permission granted on appeal for 15/5654n.

RELEVANT HISTORY:

On the site itself –

13/1305N – Outline planning application for a mixed residential scheme to provide affordable, open market and over 55s sheltered accommodation, open space and new access off Close Lane. Approved on appeal 29th July 2014 Subject to S106. This scheme indicated 76 family sized dwellings and 56 units for the over 55's

14/5114C - Reserved Matters (of 13/1305N) for 74 dwellings and associated works granted with conditions 09-Jul-2015

16/3310N – Variation of condition 14 (footpath link) on application 13/1305N – to be determined - Resolved to be approved Subject to Deed of Variation to S106 Agreement

16/2532N - Variation of condition 19 (renewable energy) on application 13/1305N – Resolved to be approved Subject to Deed of Variation to S106 Agreement

15/5654n Variation of Condition 27 (over 55's) on application 13/1305N – Approved subject to conditions and Supplemental S106 Agreement 16 February 2017

On land immediately adjacent –

15/3651N – land at Yew Tree Farm, west of Close Lane – Outline application for the residential development and access, all other matters reserved – Appeal granted 8-Jun-2016

16/4729n - Reserved Matters Application (of 15/3651n) for the erection of 40 dwellings comprising of 2, 3, 4 and 5 bedroom homes, open space and associated works – Approved subject to conditions 2 March 2017

16/4792N - Outline planning application for residential development and access, all other matters reserved – currently at appeal

NATIONAL & LOCAL POLICY

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Of particular relevance are paragraphs:

14. Presumption in favour of sustainable development.

50. Wide choice of quality homes

Borough of Crewe & Nantwich Local Plan 2011

The Development Plan for this area is the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan 2011, which identifies that the site is within the Open Countryside.

The relevant Saved Policies are:

NE.2 (Open countryside)

NE.5 (Nature Conservation and Habitats)

NE.9 (Protected Species)

NE.20 (Flood Prevention)

NE.21 (Land Fill Sites)

BE.1 (Amenity)

BE.2 (Design Standards)

BE.3 (Access and Parking)

BE.4 (Drainage, Utilities and Resources)
RES.5 (Housing in the Open Countryside)
RT.6 (Recreational Uses on the Open Countryside)
TRAN.3 (Pedestrians)
TRAN.5 (Cycling)

The saved Local Plan policies are consistent with the NPPF and should be given full weight.

Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version (CELP)

The following are considered relevant material considerations as indications of the emerging strategy

Policy MP1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Policy PG 2 – Settlement Hierarchy
Policy PG 5 - Open Countryside
Policy SD 1 - Sustainable Development in Cheshire East
Policy SD 2 - Sustainable Development Principles
Policy IN 2 – Developer Contributions
Policy SC4 – Residential Mix
Policy SC5 – Affordable Homes
Policy SE 1 – Design
Policy SE2 – Efficient Use of Land
Policy SE3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
Policy SE4 – The Landscape
Policy SE5 – Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland
Policy CO4 – Travel Plans and Travel Assessments

CONSULTATIONS:

Alsager Town Council - Requests bin provision

Haslington Parish Council - No comments received.

Strategic Housing Manager – No objection

Head of Strategic Infrastructure - No objection

Environmental Protection – No objection subject to conditions which have been included as part of the outline permission and acoustic insulation/mechanical ventilation for properties facing the M6

United Utilities – No objections, subject to a number of conditions including; that all foul and surface water shall be drained on separate systems; the prior submission of a surface water drainage scheme and the prior submission of a sustainable drainage management and maintenance plan

ANSA Greenspace – No objection

OTHER REPRESENTATIONS

9 Letters of objection/ observation have been received from local addresses have been received on the basis of the following issues -

- Loss of amenity /overlooking
- Impact upon infrastructure
- Drainage issues
- Site not suitable for the elderly
- Congestion
- Poor air quality
- Houses not required
- Highway safety
- The proposal will increase the volume of traffic on Close Lane/ Dunnocksfold Lane which are already congested at peak times
- Watercourse/ditch should be adequately fenced to prevent

APPRAISAL:

Principle of Development

The principle of residential development on this site has already been accepted following the approval of the outline application 13/1305C. More recently Condition 27 on 13/1305n has been amended by Inspector decision, under reference 15/5654n, to allow 6 no units within the site to be occupied by the over 55's, as opposed to the 56 no originally required.

The development of the larger site has already commenced and the reserved matters development for 74 dwellings approved under 15/5114C (phase 1) is well under way. This proposal comprises 26 units on the remaining area of the 13/1305N site to be developed.

The proposal contains 26 dwellings of which 30% are affordable units, 6 units are affordable bungalows and 2 affordable two storey dwellings.

Housing Mix

Policy SC4 of the submission version of the Local Plan requires that developments provide an appropriate mix of housing. In this case the development would provide the following mix:

This proposal provides for the following mix:

- 4 x1 bed bungalows (all affordable and for the over 55's),
- 2 x 2 bed bungalows (all affordable and for the over 55's),
- 5 x 2 bed semi detached (2 affordable),
- 7 x 3 bed detached,
- 3 x 4 bed detached
- 5 x 5 bed detached .

With the exception of the 6 no bungalows, there are 18 two storey detached dwellings and 2 two and a half storey semi detached.

The layout proposed is identical to the layout informally considered in the recent appeal on the site when the Applicant sought to obtain the variation of condition 27 on the original outline. The Inspector (when allowing the appeal to reduce the numbers of over 55's on site to 6) stated :

... 'In the light of the demographic trends Policy SC4 of the CELP seeks to ensure that new residential development provides a mix of tenures, types and sizes, and that to address the needs of an ageing population developments are capable of meeting and adapting to the long term needs of older residents. This is supported by the Council's Vulnerable and Older Persons Housing Strategy which indicates that the vast majority of older people wish to remain in their own home rather than utilising more specialised type of accommodation. As such, it indicates that there is a need to provide a significant amount of accessible homes, such as bungalows, in the borough....'

'The proposed modified condition would provide 6 bungalows which would contribute to an identified need for affordable accommodation for the over 55s in the area. It would also result in a scheme that would be able to be delivered. Accordingly, there would be no conflict with Policy SC4 of the CELP....'

In the light of these comments, which are a material consideration in the determination of this case, it is considered that the proposal can not be resisted and that the scheme complies with Policy SC4.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Residential Amenity

Conditions in relation to the submission of an Environmental Management Plan, Piling Method Statement, Dust Suppression Statement, noise attenuation. These are previously imposed on the outline permission and need not be repeated .

Air Quality

Given the relatively small scale nature of the scheme, an Air Quality Assessment would not be required to accompany the application.

However, it is considered appropriate to secure the necessary infrastructure to allow home charging of electric vehicles given the use of Modern Ultra Low Emission Vehicle technology is expected to rise.

This could be secured by condition.

Highways

Access

Access into the site has previously been determined to be acceptable as part of 13/1305N. This proposal utilises the internal road layout that has already been approved.

Character and Appearance

The importance of securing high quality design is specified within the NPPF and paragraph 61 states that:

“Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.”

In this case the proposed house types with the exception of the bungalows, are similar house types to those already developed by this house builder as part of phase 1 development of this approved housing site (14/5114C refers). Two of the units are 2.5 storey semi detached houses which are of similar scale and in keeping with the existing development.

The properties to the existing Phase 1 development adjoin this site. Features such as gabled roofs, dormers, porches and integral garages are considered to be appropriate in the context of existing surrounding properties.

The use of hard landscaping features such as block paving leading to private driveways and pathways leading to properties would help to clearly distinguish between the private and public spaces within the site as well as adding visual interest to the scheme.

The palette of materials will be an important consideration in this case. Bricks and concrete roof tiles of somewhat strident hues have been utilised on phase 1. These tones are not particularly in keeping with the semi rural location. However, subject to the use of complimentary and appropriate brick, render and roof tile hues, the appearance of the development will be satisfactory. This can be controlled by condition.

It is considered that the design/layout complies with Policy BE.2 (Design Standards) and the NPPF.

Trees/Hedgerows

The only tree identified for removal is a mature Silver Birch T4; the tree is largely dead removal is not contested.

Implementation of the development proposals can be facilitated without any direct or indirect impact on any high value important trees, this includes the service access roads, and private driveways. The woodland identified as W1 stands to the west of plots 16-18 & 20-23, the trees which form the eastern edge have been reduced in order to provide adequate clearance from the adjacent overhead power lines, which are to be diverted through the development. The historic pruning benefits the adjacent dwellings but the off site trees may require future maintenance. The relationship and social proximity of the trees located adjacent to plot 26 is not ideal but their value individually and collectively is not significant enough to warrant formal protection.

Landscape

The submitted Landscape Visual Impact Assessment identifies both the national and regional landscape character of the application site; this site is located within the Lower Farms and Woods Landscape Type 10, and further, in the Barthomley Character Area (LFW7).

This development is dominated by the housing environment previously granted, Accordingly, it is not considered that the proposal would result in any significant adverse effects in landscape terms.

Ecology

With respect to specific species, the Councils Ecologist advises as follows;

Water Vole

The original Phase One habitat survey identified one watercourse on site as offering potential habitat for water voles. A recent survey has been submitted which has shown no water voles to be present. The ecologist is satisfied in this regard.

Water courses

A condition is required to ensure the provision of an undeveloped buffer adjacent to the on site water courses.

Flood Risk

United Utilities have been consulted as part of this application and have raised no objection to the proposed development subject to the imposition of planning conditions requiring schemes for the disposal of foul and surface water and that the proposal shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations set out in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment. The Flood Risk Officer has not commented on this particular application, however, no objection was raised to the previous application for the same site and similar development. An update will be provided in this regard.

Environmental Conclusion

The detailed layout and design of this residential development site is considered to be acceptable.

Other environmental considerations such as; landscape, highway safety, flooding and drainage are considered to be acceptable or neutral subject to conditions / mitigation.

Economic Role

It is accepted that the construction of a housing development would bring the usual economic benefit to the closest facilities in Alsager for the duration of the construction of the site, and would potentially provide local employment opportunities in construction and the wider economic benefits to the construction industry supply chain. There would be some economic and social benefit by virtue of new residents in 26 units spending money in the area and using local services.

Social Role

The proposed development would provide open market and social housing which in itself, would be a social benefit.

Affordable Housing

The site falls within the Alsager sub-area for the purposes of the Strategic Housing Market (SHMA) Update 2013.

The Interim Planning Statement on Affordable Housing (IPS) and Policy SC5 in the Local Plan Strategy Submission Version outline that in this location the Council will negotiate for the provision of an appropriate element of the total dwelling provision to be for affordable housing on all sites of 15 dwellings or more or than 0.4 hectare in size.

This is a proposed development of 26 dwellings therefore in order to meet the Council's Policy on Affordable Housing there is a requirement for 8 dwellings to be provided as affordable dwellings. 5 units should be provided as Affordable rent and 3 units as Intermediate tenure.

There are 249 applicants on the Cheshire Homechoice waiting list who have selected Alsager as their first choice for rehousing. They require 95 x 1 bedroom, 91 x 2 bedroom, 49 x 3 bedroom and 14 x 4 bedroom dwellings.

The Affordable Housing IPS requires that the affordable units should be tenure blind and pepper potted within the development, the external design, comprising elevation, detail and materials should be compatible with the open market homes on the development thus achieving full visual integration and also that the affordable housing should be provided no later than occupation of 50% of the open market dwellings.

The proposed layout concentrates the affordable bungalows to the southern boundary of the southern development zone proposed. Concerns have been raised by Officers in previous applications on this site that the layout results in inadequate pepper-potting, when this site is looked at in conjunction with the wider Close Lane site approved under 14/5114C . There has been a material change in circumstances since the approval of 40 units (with 12 units of affordable housing) distributes more affordable housing in the wider site. This has satisfactorily addressed previous concerns. It is therefore concluded that the proposal, with the wider approved development site, has an adequate amount of pepper – potting of affordable units

Public Open Space

Policy RT.3 states that where a development exceeds 20 dwellings the Local Planning Authority will seek POS on site.

It is considered that the POS and LEAP already provided on the site as part of the outline scheme will be sufficient to cater for the demand as a result of this proposal.

Compliance with Conditions on Outline Permission as varied by 15/5645N (Variation of the over 55's condition)

Conditions are imposed on the outline permission for the development of the site which require

Details of Bin Storage, Parking Provision and an updated Arboricultural Impact Assessment to be submitted as part of the reserved matters. These have been satisfactorily addressed as part of this application.

Planning Balance

The principle of development has already been established. The development, subject to conditions, will not have a detrimental impact upon residential amenity of future or existing residents it would provide benefits in terms of much needed affordable housing provision and would help in the Councils delivery of 5 year housing land supply.

The impact upon education infrastructure has already been assessed at outline stage and the recent appeal that allowed the increased in family units/decrease in over 55's accommodation when the Unilateral Undertakings were accepted by both Planning Inspectors. The impact would be mitigated and would thus be neutral.

In terms of the POS and children's play provision this is considered to be acceptable. The social housing is provided in accordance with the IPS and is acceptable

The proposed access point is acceptable and the traffic impact as part of this development has already been accepted. The internal design of the highway layout/parking provision is considered to be acceptable.

The development of the site would provide a number of economic benefits in the residential use of the site and residential economic activity.

It is considered that the planning balance weighs in favour of this development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

- 1. Plans**
- 2. Notwithstanding details forming part of application materials to be submitted and approved**
- 3. Landscaping scheme submission**
- 4. Landscaping scheme implementation**
- 5. Submission of boundary treatments**
- 6. Levels**
- 7. Tree Protection**
- 8. Breeding birds**
- 10. No materials to be stored with 5m of ditch/ ditch to be fenced off during construction**
- 11 Removal of permitted development rights – smaller plots**
- 12. Boundary treatment to be as per plans**
- 13 Removal of permitted development for boundary walls forward of building line**
- 14. Noise insulation scheme for dwellings in accordance with recommendations in noise report**
- 15. Overhead power line diversion scheme**

In order to give proper effect to the Board`s/Committee`s intentions and without changing the substance of the decision, authority is delegated to the Principal Planning Manager (Regulation), in consultation with the Chair (or in his absence the Vice Chair) of Southern Planning Committee, to correct any technical slip or omission in the wording of the resolution, between approval of the minutes and issue of the decision notice.

