



**PLANNING COMMITTEE:** 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2014  
**DIRECTORATE:** Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning  
**HEAD OF PLANNING:** Susan Bridge

**N/2014/0786:** Outline application for up to 41 dwellings, estate road, open space and associated works on land at Welford Road, Boughton

**WARD:** Fringe application

**APPLICANT:** Mrs. E. Alker (et al)  
**AGENT:** Mr. Laurence Wilbraham

**REFERRED BY:** Head of Planning  
**REASON:** Major Fringe Application

**DEPARTURE:** N/A

---

**CONSULTATION BY DAVENTRY DISTRICT COUNCIL:**

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 That Northampton Borough Council has **NO OBJECTIONS** to the principle of development subject to the issues outlined below being addressed by Daventry District Council:

- Development of the site shall be viewed as related to the growth of Northampton (through the exception to the NRDA boundary allowed for in policy S4 of the Submitted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy).
- Ensuring that the development does not prejudice the delivery of the Northampton North West Bypass.
- Ensuring that the recreational function and value of the Brampton Valley Way linear park is maintained with particular attention being applied to the treatment and landscaping of the western boundary

of the application site and the precise position of the estate road within the site.

- Ensuring that direct pedestrian links are provided across the site to Brampton Valley Way in the interests of serving the future recreational needs of the North of Whitehills SUE.
- Ensuring that the amenities of future residential occupiers at the site would be safeguarded, particularly in respect to the satisfactory mitigation of traffic noise from Welford Road.
- No objections being received from the Local Highway Authority in respect to the impact of the scheme upon the local road network.
- No objections being received from the Environment Agency in respect to the impact of the scheme upon flood risk and the proposed drainage provisions at the site.
- In light of the development being directly related to the growth of Northampton, the appropriate Officers of this Authority should be involved in the negotiation of any Section 106 agreement in relation to such matters as affordable housing provision, infrastructure delivery and site-specific mitigation. Northampton Borough Council should be a financial beneficiary of any such agreement.

## **2. THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 Outline planning permission has been applied for to Daventry District Council for the erection of up to 41no. dwellings, including the construction of an estate road, open space and associated works.
- 2.2 Although the application is in outline form, with the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping of the site matters reserved for subsequent approval, an indicative scheme layout has been provided to show how development could potentially be accommodated upon the site. The dwellings are proposed to be between 1 ½ and 2 ½ stories in height and designed to reflect the appearance of development nearby. The majority of existing vegetation on the site would be retained with additional planting provided to the front and rear garden areas of the proposed houses.

## **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 3.1 The site is rectangular in shape and measures 1.59 Ha in area. It is wholly located within the Daventry District, although the southern boundary immediately abuts the northern boundary of Northampton Borough. The site is bound to its east by Welford Road, where the access to the site would be drawn from, and to its west by the Brampton Valley Way (a public footpath / cycleway).

- 3.2 The site located to the east of Welford Road (i.e. opposite the site) is allocated for the development of 1,000 dwellings as part of the North of Whitehills Sustainable Urban Extension to Northampton. This makes up part of the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA) as currently proposed in the emerging West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Submission (as modified) Plan.
- 3.3 The site is currently agricultural and used for grazing – stables are located at the northern end of the site. The topography of the site slopes down from the eastern side of the site (Welford Road) to the western side of the site. The Brampton Valley Way stands at a slightly higher level than the lowest part of the site.

#### **4. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 No known relevant planning history at the site.

#### **5. PLANNING POLICY**

##### **Development Plan**

- 5.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the Northampton Local Plan 1997 saved policies, and whilst not yet adopted, weight can be attributed to the Submitted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (as subsequently modified).

##### **National Policies**

- 5.2 The **National Planning Policy Framework** (the Framework) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and provides guidance for how those policies are expected to be applied.
- 5.3 The presumption in favour of sustainable development (para.14) identifies the development plan as the starting point for decision making and enables development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Local Plan to be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or out of date, the presumption in favour of sustainable development requires permission to be granted unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits (unless specific policies in the Framework suggest otherwise).
- 5.4 The Framework (para. 16) enables decision-takers to give weight to emerging plans subject to certain criteria, including the stage of preparation of the emerging plan, the degree of consistency of the relevant policies with the Framework and the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies.

5.5 Paragraphs 47-49 indicate the need for Local Planning Authorities to identify the ability to deliver a 5 year housing land supply, where this cannot be shown, the policies in Plans related to housing are considered out of date and there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

#### 5.6 **Daventry Local Plan**

EN10 – ‘Green Wedges, Rural Access Area and Green Links’ requires development not to be discordant with the predominantly open / green nature of a green wedge or not to reduce the separation between settlements or not to compromise agricultural operations, recreational use or wildlife value or not to impair public access to a green wedge.

HS24 – ‘Open Countryside’ restricts residential development in the open countryside.

#### 5.7 **Northampton Local Plan**

E2 – ‘Riverside Landscape’ requires development alongside the River Nene to be compatible with existing important wildlife habitats.

E6 – ‘Greenspace’ requires that development does not unacceptably prejudice the function of Greenspace areas.

E19 – ‘Implementing Development’ requires any adverse impact of development to be allowed for or mitigated against.

E20 – ‘New Development’ requires development to adequately reflect the character of its surroundings.

H6 – ‘Housing Development within Primarily Residential Areas’ requires development to be of a scale and density that would not be detrimental to the character of the surrounding area.

L16 – ‘River Valley Policy Area’ requires development to avoid significant harm to the amenity value of open space within the valley and to pay adequate regard to the character, natural features and wildlife of the area.

L29 – ‘Tourism River Valley Policy Area’ requires the Council to seek the provision of new tourism facilities to accompany major development within the valley.

#### 5.8 **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

Planning Obligations SPD (February 2013)

Affordable Housing Interim Statement (February 2013)

## **Other Material Considerations**

- 5.9 Submitted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (as subsequently modified).
- 5.10 Weight can be given to the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS), this would be significant where a policy has received few representations and unresolved objections are not considered likely to have a significant bearing on the strategy of the Plan. The JCS provides an up to date evidence base and considers the current Government requirements for plan making, being prepared in full conformity with the NPPF. The plan was initially examined in 2013 with further hearings held in spring 2014 to consider proposed modifications; the findings of the Inspector are awaited.
- 5.11 Policy SA – ‘Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development’ requires local planning authorities to take a positive approach to determining development proposals.
- 5.12 Policy S1 – ‘The Distribution of Development’ requires that development be concentrated primarily in and adjoining the principal urban areas of Northampton, i.e. within the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA). Located outside the NRDA, the application site is therefore within West Northamptonshire’s rural area – an area in which development opportunities are limited.
- 5.13 Policy S3 – ‘Scale and Distribution of Housing Development’ makes provisions for the overall scale and distribution of new housing required in West Northamptonshire. Northampton’s housing and employment needs will be met primarily within Northampton’s existing urban area and at the Sustainable Urban Extensions within the NRDA.
- 5.14 Policy S4 – ‘Northampton Related Development Area’ makes provisions for 28,470 net additional dwellings within the NRDA and defines the boundary of the NRDA.
- 5.15 Policy H1 – ‘Housing Density and Mix and Type of Dwellings’ requires housing developments to make the most effective use of land having regard to such considerations as the existing character and density of the local area, the accessibility to services and facilities, proximity to public transport routes and the impact on the amenities of occupiers of neighbouring properties.
- 5.16 Policy H2 – ‘Affordable Housing’ requires 35% of the total number of dwellings provided to be affordable on sites located within the Northampton Related Development Area.

## **6. CONSULTATIONS/ REPRESENTATIONS**

- 6.1 None received.

## **7. APPRAISAL**

### **NRDA Boundary**

- 7.1 At the initial Joint Core Strategy examination hearings the Inspector questioned the appropriateness of the NRDA boundary and its potential to be inflexible in relation to changing circumstances – particularly its potential to act as a straitjacket in restricting the ability to meet Northampton’s objectively assessed housing needs. Consequently examined policy S4 now includes the modification to allow for (in exceptional circumstances) additional development outside the NRDA boundary ‘only if it meets the vision, objectives and policies of this plan’.
- 7.2 Despite modifications there remain unresolved objections to emerging Policy S4. In February 2014, Northampton Borough Council made representations to the consultation on Main Modifications in respect of revisions to the NRDA boundary to accommodate additional SUE allocations to meet development needs to 2029 (rather than the original 2026 plan period).
- 7.3 The Council supports the inclusion in the plan of the objectively assessed housing needs to 2029, but requests that the sites to accommodate those additional housing numbers are not specifically allocated in the Plan. The Council, along with partners represented by the JSPC, would then work to identify within the NRDA Local Plan (part 2) the remaining allocations in the period to 2029 (or beyond, where necessary).
- 7.4 These allocations would occur within an area of search identified through a revised NRDA ‘red line’ boundary consistent with all reasonable alternatives identified within the SA/SEA which accompanies the JCS.
- 7.5 The application site was not considered as an alternative location for a SUE as the scale of development offered by the site is not strategic in nature. However, the application site is located between sites NJO\_06 (North of Whitehills SUE) and NJO\_07 (an alternative option). It is therefore considered that the site is located within the area of search consistent with the reasonable alternatives.

### **Five Year Housing Land Supply**

- 7.6 The Framework (para. 47) requires local authorities to identify and maintain a five year supply of housing land. An assessment of objectively assessed need of both market and affordable housing was undertaken to inform the WNJCS. At present, Daventry District Council has a 5 year supply of housing land. However Northampton does not currently have a five year supply of housing land.

- 7.7 The applicant focuses on the 5 year housing land supply that relates to Daventry District. As highlighted, the application site adjoins the built area of Northampton, whereas the village of Chapel Brampton is located approximately 2km north of the site. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the proposed development would function as a part of Northampton. Due to the site's contiguous relationship with Northampton, the argument with regards to the planned housing being related to Daventry District's wider housing needs is perverse.
- 7.8 Although situated in Daventry District the development would form part of Northampton both in form and function, and in any reasonable assessment should be considered to contribute to meeting Northampton's housing needs. In relation to the provisions of paragraph 49 of the NPPF, Northampton's lack of supply is a significant factor. Unlike other uses, the importance of increasing the supply of housing is given additional weight by a further reiteration of the need to consider housing applications in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. As such this site has the potential to contribute to the supply of new homes within the NRDA over the next five years through the provision of 41 dwellings consistent with the provisions of modified Policy S4.

### **Local Policy Context**

- 7.9 In terms of the Daventry Local Plan, the site is located within an area identified as a "green wedge" by saved Policy EN10. Saved Policy HS24 identifies the site as located outside a settlement and within 'open countryside'. In respect of the site's function as a green wedge and its location within open countryside, the policy context is one of seeking to provide a buffer around Northampton to prevent the coalescence of settlements, whilst maintaining landscape features and public access to the countryside.
- 7.10 In terms of the Northampton Local Plan, the site is adjacent to an existing residential area (Policy H6). The site also adjoins the Brampton Valley Way, which is identified as functional Greenspace (Policy E6) recognising the importance of the linear park in providing public access to the countryside. The application site is in close proximity to the Brampton Arm (of the River Nene). The River Policy Area (Policies L16 and L29) seeks to maintain the character of the river valley and its tributaries, on the grounds of both amenity and in order to conserve a pleasant setting for informal recreation.

### **Landscape & Visual Impact**

- 7.11 The scheme would breach the defined settlement edge of Northampton and would result in the development of land located within a designated "green wedge". Despite resulting in a loss of some open land (the application site is currently in use as a paddock), the green wedge

would remain predominantly open and green in appearance and nature. The proposed development is not expected to unreasonably reduce the physical separation between settlements; the application site is modest in size and scale and constrained by physical features (i.e. the Brampton Valley Way and Welford Road).

- 7.12 The local policy context highlights the important landscape in the locality, namely the river valley. This landscape is particularly important to the setting and amenity of the Brampton Valley Way linear park. Views to the east of the Brampton Valley Way are constrained by changes in topography, tree belts, and existing built development along both sides of Welford Road. Views to the west, across the river valley, are broad and open. Located to the east of Brampton Valley Way, the proposed development is therefore not expected to result in adverse impacts on the setting of the Brampton Valley Way.
- 7.13 The relationship between the site and the Brampton Valley Way is an important consideration. The proposal should be carefully scrutinised to ensure the site's design and layout is sensitive to, and does not prejudice the function of the Brampton Valley Way as an important recreation facility, as set out by Northampton saved Policy E6.
- 7.14 It is considered that particular attention would need to be applied at detailed planning stage to the treatment and landscaping of the western boundary of the application site. A comprehensive green buffer should be achieved in the interests of protecting the integrity of Brampton Valley Way. At the same time, being mindful of the time taken for landscaping to mature, it should be ensured that the amenities of future residential occupiers would be protected as a result of robust boundary treatment.

### **Northampton Northwest Bypass**

- 7.15 The application site is in close proximity to the indicative route of the Northampton North West Bypass, as identified on the Key Diagram. The JCS identifies the NW bypass as a key primary infrastructure project, required to serve the Sustainable Urban Extensions of North of Whitehills, Kings Heath and Northampton West. This piece of infrastructure will be delivered late in the JCS Plan period. Nevertheless, it will also impact on the landscape context surrounding the application site. In this context, the potential 'urbanisation' impacts could also be regarded as diminishing the longer term impact of the current housing proposal, both visually and in defining the urban edge of Northampton to the west of the Welford Road.
- 7.16 Given the JCS identification of the need for the NW bypass to accommodate wider strategic housing needs, it is necessary to ensure that the current proposal will not undermine its delivery and that a satisfactory residential environment can also be provided taking



account of the environmental factors associated with the NW bypass, such as noise impact.

### **Access**

- 7.17 It is noted that the indicative proposals incorporate the retention and upgrade of an existing footpath link that runs through the site (on a north-west / south-east axis) from Welford Road. It is considered that it would be desirable to provide further punctuations of the site in the interests of encouraging accessibility to the Brampton Valley Way. This is particularly pertinent in the context of Buckton Fields (North of Whitehills SUE) and the provision of a direct link(s) to Brampton Valley Way for future residents. The existing link, when considered alongside the proposed Masterplan for Buckton Fields, would provide a convoluted route rather than a direct link across the northern part of the application site.
- 7.18 In respect to the new estate road access into the site, the detailed alignment of this road should also be carefully considered to ensure that it does not adversely impact upon the character of the Brampton Valley Way due to its close proximity to the western boundary of the site. It should be ensured that an appropriate separation distance / buffer can be achievable to soften the estate road's visual impact.

### **Environmental Matters**

- 7.19 It is noted that the submitted Flood Risk Assessment indicates that the entirety of the site is located within the lowest risk Flood Zone 1. Notwithstanding this, acceptance needs to be sought from the Environment Agency in respect to the proposed scheme of surface water management and sustainable urban drainage put forward.
- 7.20 It does not appear that a Noise Assessment has been submitted in support of the application. The appropriate officer(s) in Environmental Health at Daventry District Council should be consulted in the interests of providing assurances that a satisfactory residential environment would be provided for future occupiers of the site in close proximity to Welford Road and its associated traffic flows. An Ecological Survey has been submitted in support of the application, the conclusions and recommendations of which should be adhered to.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 In the absence of an up to date Development Plan, the presumption in favour of sustainable development should be applied. The emerging West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy is a material consideration, and existing unresolved objections to the location of the NRDA boundary are a significant factor. In addition to Northampton Borough Council's comments in respect of Policy S4 to deliver additional flexibility to the NRDA boundary, emerging Policy S4 (as currently

drafted) includes the modification to allow for (in exceptional circumstances) additional development outside the NRDA boundary.

- 8.2 The application site is located adjacent to Northampton and in an area consistent with the 'area of search' for reasonable alternatives identified through SA/SEA. Although situated in Daventry District the development would form part of Northampton both in form and function. The application site therefore has the potential to meet Northampton's needs through the provision of 41 dwellings. Similarly, the North of Whitehills SUE on the opposite side of Welford Road is allocated for the purpose of meeting Northampton's housing needs. In addition, the North of Whitehills SUE and NW bypass will redefine the urban edge of Northampton, beyond the application site.
- 8.3 Despite the current NRDA boundary there is logic in determining the ability of the scheme to contribute toward meeting the NRDA's 5 year housing land supply. The current lack of a 5 year land supply within the NRDA further reinforces the need to apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development. However, it must be made clear that this is on the basis of the development clearly being identified as meeting Northampton's needs.
- 8.4 There are likely to be planning obligations required to mitigate the development's impact on Northampton and in particular its infrastructure, such as health facilities, local schools, improving public transport provision, sports/recreational provision. If the development were granted permission, Northampton Borough Council would be likely to request Daventry to negotiate S.106 obligations primarily related to the impact on Northampton's infrastructure, and provide for affordable housing numbers and types associated with Northampton's needs.
- 8.5 The proposal is not expected to result in adverse impacts on the river valley landscape in the context of the existing adopted Development Plan. However the relationship between the site and the Brampton Valley Way is an important factor. The detail of the proposal should be considered carefully to ensure the site's design and layout is sensitive to the amenity and function of the Brampton Valley Way linear park which provides as an important facility for recreation.
- 8.6 Taking account of the particular characteristics of this site, and other material considerations, Northampton Borough Council raises no objection to the principle of the housing proposal, subject to the issues outlined below being addressed by Daventry District Council:-
  - Development of the site shall be viewed as related to the growth of Northampton (through the exception to the NRDA boundary allowed for in policy S4 of the Submitted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy).

- Ensuring that the development does not prejudice the delivery of the Northampton North West Bypass.
- Ensuring that the recreational function and value of the Brampton Valley Way linear park is maintained with particular attention being applied to the treatment and landscaping of the western boundary of the application site and the precise position of the estate road within the site.
- Ensuring that direct pedestrian links are provided across the site to Brampton Valley Way in the interests of serving the future recreational needs of the North of Whitehills SUE.
- Ensuring that the amenities of future residential occupiers at the site would be safeguarded, particularly in respect to the satisfactory mitigation of traffic noise from Welford Road.
- No objections being received from the Local Highway Authority in respect to the impact of the scheme upon the local road network.
- No objections being received from the Environment Agency in respect to the impact of the scheme upon flood risk and the proposed drainage provisions at the site.
- In light of the development being directly related to the growth of Northampton; the appropriate Officers of this Authority should be involved in the negotiation of any Section 106 agreement in relation to such matters as affordable housing provision, infrastructure delivery and site-specific mitigation. Northampton Borough Council should be a financial beneficiary of any such agreement.

## **9. CONDITIONS**

9.1 Not applicable.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

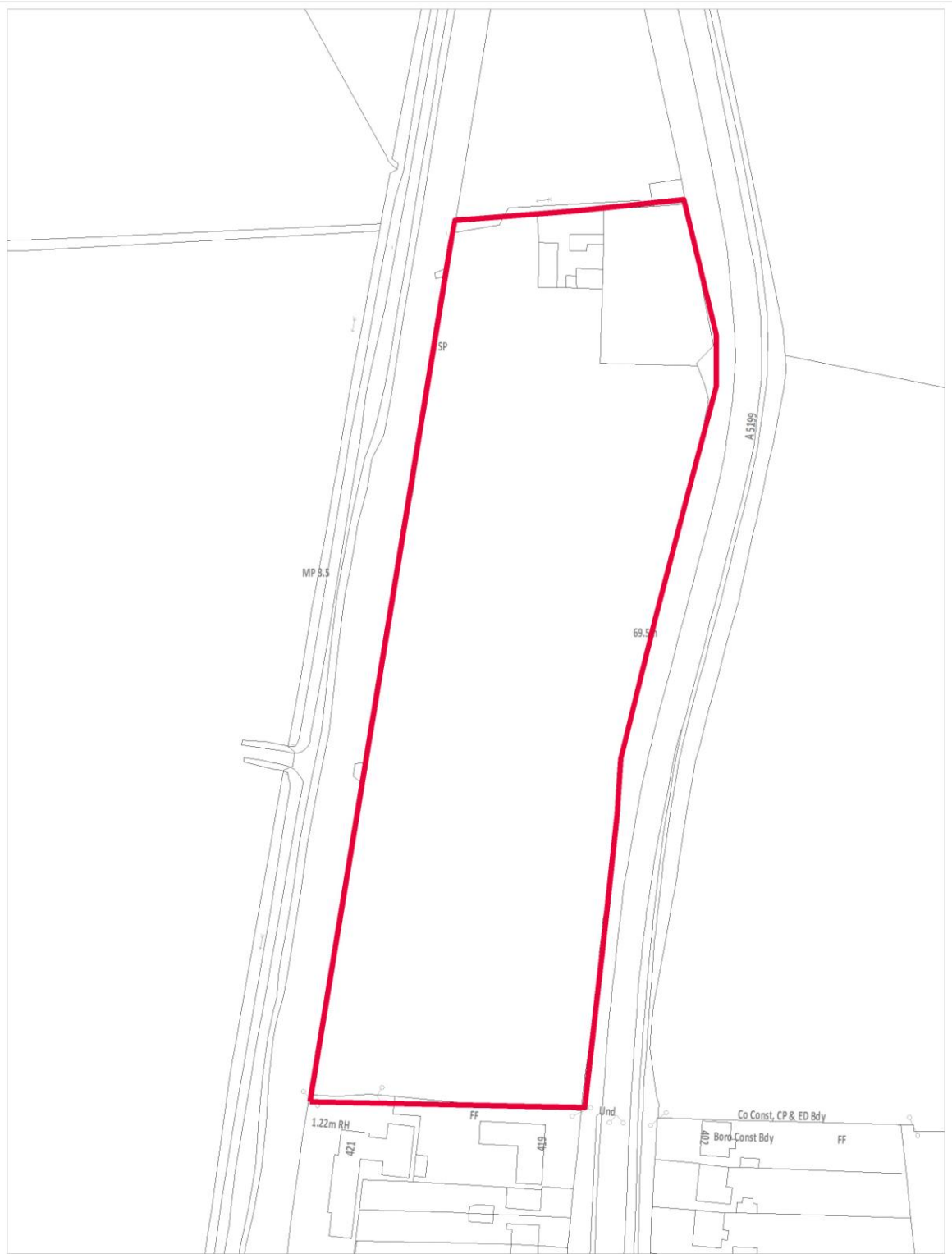
10.1 N/2014/0786.

## **11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None.

## **12. SUMMARY AND LINKS TO CORPORATE PLAN**

12.1 In reaching the attached recommendations regard has been given to securing the objectives, visions and priorities outlined in the Corporate Plan together with those of associated Frameworks and Strategies.



Name: Location Plan  
 Date: 13th August 2014  
 Scale: 1:1250  
 Dept: Planning  
 Project: Committee

Title  
**Land at Top End of Welford road**

Produced from the 2011 Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown Copyright  
 Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Licence number: 100019655